

Opposition rejects Arafat appeal

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Ten headline Palestinian groups opposed to Yasser Arafat rejected on Monday his appeal for a "national dialogue" aimed at reconciling their differences. The groups said they "reject this suspicious call for dialogue and reiterate that union is impossible with those who have signed defeatist accords with the enemy, violated the national charter and suppressed the resistance" to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. Mr. Arafat announced on Sunday the creation of a high committee for national dialogue to reconcile rival Palestinian factions. The committee is headed by Mr. Arafat and includes leaders from various Palestinian bodies, including the Popular and Democratic Fronts for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP and DFLP). But the opposition groups based in Damascus said in a statement that Mr. Arafat's call was "aimed at getting him out of the impasse after the Palestinian uprising," in reference to last month's deadly Israeli-Palestinian clashes.

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Bahraini leader meets GCC head

MANAMA (AFP) — Bahrain's emir, Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, met Monday with the head of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), whose next summit Manama has vowed to boycott. Sheikh Isa and GCC Secretary General Jamal Al Hujailan discussed ways to "strengthen the GCC's role," the Bahraini news agency GNA said. Bahrain has said it will boycott the next GCC summit to be held in Qatar in December because of a territorial dispute with Qatar over the Hawar islands in the Gulf. The GCC groups Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

Kaddoumi holds talks in Beijing

BEIJING (AFP) — Palestinian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Kaddoumi met here Monday with China's foreign minister and top legislator, both of whom expressed support for the Palestinian cause in negotiations with Israel. The Xinhua news agency said. Both Qiao Shi, chairman of the standing committee of the National People's Congress and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said China supported the principle of "land-for-peace" in the negotiations. "The agreements reached between Palestine and Israel should be earnestly implemented, and parties concerned should continue the peace process on the existing basis," Mr. Qiao was quoted as saying. Mr. Qian stressed that China was a "reliable" friend of the Palestinians, and has "always supported the Palestinians' just cause of restoring their legitimate national rights," the official Chinese news agency said.

Yemen inaugurates new oilfield

SANAA (AFP) — Yemen on Monday inaugurated a new oil field developed by the firms Exxon of the United States and Total of France, with initial output at 15,000 barrels a day, the oil ministry said. The field in the Shabwa region, 350 kilometers east of the capital Sanaa, will increase production to 30,000 barrels a day in 1997, the ministry added. Yemen currently produces around 360,000 barrels a day and has reserves estimated at 1.39 billion barrels, official figures show. Most of its production comes from Maarib fields in the northwest and Massila in the south. At least 15 foreign companies, including Hunt of the United States and Oxy of Canada, are involved in oil exploration here. The Middle East Economic Survey (MEES), a specialist weekly, said in March that Yemen's oil production would increase by 14 per cent early next year to exceed 400,000 barrels a day.

4 beheaded for rape in S. Arabia

RIYADH (AFP) — Three Saudis and a Pakistani convicted of rape were beheaded Monday in the Holy City of Mecca, bringing to 42 the number of people executed in Saudi Arabia this year, the Interior Ministry said. The four forced their way into a home, drank alcohol, tied up the owner and raped his wife, said the statement which was read on state television. Saudi Arabia, which enforces Islamic law strictly, carries out the death penalty in cases of murder, rape, armed robbery and drug trafficking.

King visits Jericho today after talks with Arafat

Netanyahu may join King, Arafat in self-rule city amid intense efforts to lift logjam in peace process

In meeting with Palestinian leader, HM reaffirms all support to advance quest for peace

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein will visit the Palestinian city of Jericho today in his first trip to the self-rule areas after holding talks here yesterday with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on means of ending the crisis facing the peace process.

The King's visit was announced late Monday evening after Amman witnessed a flurry of political activities aimed at salvaging the peace process, with the King talking with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu publicly for the first time since the Oct. 1-2 Washington summit and the special U.S. coordinator for the peace process, Dennis Ross, paying a brief visit to Amman to inform the King on the results of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh told the Jordan Times that the visit, which comes at the invitation of Mr. Arafat, was an expression "of His Majesty's support for the peace process and efforts to overcome the crisis facing it."

Dr. Khasawneh said that during the telephone conversation between the King and the Israeli premier, Mr. Netanyahu told the King that he remains committed to his promise to "achieve an opening" in the stalled peace talks with the Palestinians.

Dr. Khasawneh noted that Mr. Netanyahu had promised the King a "pleasant surprise" on the Palestinian track during the Washington summit and the King said Sunday upon return from the United Kingdom that he awaited the results of the talks "and let's hope for some good news."

Jordan news agency, Petra, said the King and Mr. Netanyahu exchanged views on the Palestinian-Israeli talks, with the King stressing that the necessity of overcoming the difficulties facing the peace process and finding solutions to all issues on which the Palestinians and the Israelis differ.

Sources said the King and Mr. Arafat will leave together onboard a Jordanian plane as news reports spoke of the possibility of Mr. Netanyahu holding

joint talks with the King and Mr. Arafat.

"It is possible that Mr. Netanyahu will meet with His Majesty and President Arafat but nothing is confirmed yet," an official source who asked not to be named told the Jordan Times.

Dr. Khasawneh said the talks King Hussein held with Mr. Arafat in Amman yesterday were "very positive" and that the issue of the redeployment of Israeli troops in Hebron was in the centre of the talks which also dealt with other major issues.

Petra reported that Mr. Arafat informed the King of the results of the talks that the Palestinians started with the Israelis after the Washington summit. During the summit, King Hussein expressed disappointment in the policies of Mr. Netanyahu and criticised him for demonstrating the "arrogance of power" rather than vision. In press statements later, the King warned that Israeli policies were pushing the region towards "the brink of an abyss" and were threatening the whole future of the peace process.



His Majesty King Hussein with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at the Royal Palace on Monday in a meeting attended by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and Mahmoud Abbas, a senior member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee (photo by Youssef Allan)

An official source said the King expressed his support for the Palestinians, telling Mr. Arafat that "your cause is ours and we are ready to provide you with whatever support you need."

Petra quoted the King as stressing the need for continuing the peace process and consolidating efforts so that the process can overcome the obstacles it is facing and comprehensive

peace can be achieved in the region.

The King expressed Jordan's unwavering support for the Palestinians in their pursuit of realising their rights on their national soil, Petra said.

An official source, who attended the open meeting which was also attended by officials from both sides after the King and Mr. Arafat held a closed-door

meeting in Raghadan Palace, said it was clear that Mr. Arafat appreciated the stand of King Hussein on the crisis facing the Palestinian track of the peace negotiations.

Upon arrival in Jordan through the King Hussein Bridge for the first time after moving to Gaza in 1994, Mr. Arafat told reporters that he believed the King can positively

influence "the way things are going due to the high esteem he has on the Arab and international levels."

But the Palestinian leader stressed that the talks with the Israelis are still facing difficulties because of Israel's "intransigence and its unwillingness" to help overcome the deadlock.

"I come to Jordan to consult with His Majesty King Hussein and to explain our concerns and difficulties that we are facing" as a result of Israel's refusal to implement the agreements the two sides have signed, Mr. Arafat said.

"There are still delays caused by the Israelis and the political, economic and security committees which started negotiation earlier have not reached any positive results yet," said Mr. Arafat, who was received at the bridge by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and other officials.

Mr. Arafat, who was accompanied by a high-powered delegation including Local Government Minister Saeb Erekat, Minister of Information Yasser Abed Rabbo and security

(Continued on page 7)

Netanyahu-Arafat summit in works amid preparations for Taba meetings

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday he was prepared to meet Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat after a new round of negotiations to work out a long-delayed Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank town of Hebron.

Mr. Netanyahu said on Israeli public radio that a summit with Mr. Arafat could "take place near the end of the negotiations, which are currently at a sensitive stage."

Nabil Abu Rudeina, a top Arafat aide, also kept the door open for a summit, saying there could be a meeting "if this would be productive," although there are not yet "any fixed

plans."

Talk of a summit came as the two sides held a final day of informal discussions in a bid to narrow their differences over the Hebron pullout ahead of the official negotiations due to resume Tuesday in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba.

Palestinian negotiator Jamil Al Tarifi and Israel's Oren Shahor toured Hebron together on Monday to get a last "up-close" look at the situation on the ground before sitting down at the negotiating table.

The two heads of the negotiating committee on civil affairs visited the area around Jewish settlements in the centre of the

city, where 450 Jewish settlers live amid Hebron's 120,000 Palestinians.

U.S. Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross, who convinced the two sides to postpone the Taba talks for a day to give behind-the-scenes contacts a chance to lay the groundwork, was "very involved" with both sides on Monday, U.S. officials said.

The new round of negotiations at Taba came after five days of sessions last week on the Israel-Gaza border which ended in deadlock over Hebron.

Under the 1995 Oslo self-rule accords, Israel was to have handed most of Hebron over to the Pal-

(Continued on page 7)

Weizman assures Mubarak of Israel's commitment to peace

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israeli President Ezer Weizman pledged here Monday that his country would honour agreements struck with the Palestinians, in fence-mending talks with his Egyptian counterpart Hosni Mubarak.

"The (Israeli) government is not going back," on its agreements with the Palestinians, Mr. Weizman told a joint news conference with Mr. Mubarak after more than an hour of talks.

"The government, perhaps, is slowing down in view of some people's liking. But like I said to President Mubarak, the government of Israel will continue and will do all its best to achieve peace with the Palestinians," he said.

Mr. Mubarak linked any meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to an Israeli redeployment in Hebron and said his talks with Mr. Weizman covered the "present situation of the Palestinian problem."

"The President (Weiz-

man) assured me that they are honouring the agreements and that it will be implemented" as signed, Mr. Mubarak said.

"Egypt will continue supporting the peace process as much as we can until we reach a comprehensive settlement to the whole problem and until peace prevails in the whole area," Mr. Mubarak said.

Earlier Mr. Mubarak and Mr. Weizman embraced as the Egyptian leader welcomed the Israeli president at Cairo airport before heading straight into talks at the Itiyadiya Palace in northern Cairo.

Cairo is frustrated with the slow pace of the Palestinian-Israeli talks, blaming the Jewish state for failing to respect accords signed between the Palestinians and Israel's former Labour government.

Mr. Weizman, pressed on Mr. Netanyahu's failure to carry out aspects of the agreements, said: "We have had security problems in the past, we hope that we

will be over it and we have to be very careful of what we do in the future."

The Egyptian press has taken violent swipes at Mr. Netanyahu, accusing him of being "mentally deranged." A Foreign Ministry official even said he needed a "psychiatrist," prompting Israeli protests.

Mr. Mubarak told the U.S. news magazine Time that he was "very, very, very upset. Since Mr. Netanyahu came everything is frozen."

He warned of renewed violence unless Israel implements its peace accords with the Palestinians and said Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat could not sell out on Hebron.

"The situation is boiling. The people are fed up all over the Arab World," he said.

At the news conference with Mr. Weizman, the Egyptian president said: "It is not a matter of being upset or annoyed. It is a

(Continued on page 7)

PUK edges closer to Erbil; Baghdad urges dialogue to settle its rivalry with KDP

ERBIL (Agencies) — The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) on Monday moved closer to the main Kurdish city of Erbil in a lightning offensive aimed at regaining control of northern Iraq from its Baghdad-backed Kurdish rivals.

In related developments: — Baghdad called on the PUK and its rival Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) to settle their differences through dialogue but otherwise adopted a low profile in the latest conflict.

"We have consistently given severe warnings in the past against dealing with foreign powers," a statement issued by Iraq's ruling Revolutionary Command Council and Baath Party said. "We call upon the parties that have returned to fighting to expel the foreign forces and not to deal with them."

The Iraqi leadership said it was prepared to invite all parties to peace talks in the capital, Baghdad.

— Iran denied that it was supporting the PUK in its

offensive. But the KDP maintained that the PUK forces were supported by Iranian tanks and heavy armour.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi said the charges were raised as a reaction to "protests by international bodies because of the collaboration of KDP leader Masoud Barzani with the Iraqi army in suppressing the defenceless Kurdish people and turning them into refugees."

— The United States also called on both groups to stop fighting and urged the governments of Iraq and Iran to stay out of the conflict.

"We are calling on both the PUK and the KDP to end the fighting," said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns. "We don't believe Kurdish interests will be promoted by a continuation of fighting between them."

"We hope both Iran and Iraq will stay out of the

fighting," he added.

Mr. Burns said U.S. officials had been in touch with both Kurdish groups in an attempt to make peace between them.

— PUK leader Jalal Talabani was quoted as saying that he did not want to attack Erbil.

"We don't have a plan now to do that, because the city is surrounded by Iraqi tanks," he said in an interview with the London-based Arabic newspaper Al Hayat.

"We leave Erbil to its people," he said. Mr. Talabani said the Iraqi army "intervened today (Sunday) by launching artillery shelling on Chamchamal, then it stopped."

U.N. officials and guards in Iraqi Kurdistan said on Monday that Mr. Talabani's forces had regained control of most of the territory they lost to the KDP six weeks ago.

They said PUK guerrillas had now recaptured two more towns, Degala and Koi Sanjaq, after taking

control over the strategic Dokan dam area, site of a major hydroelectric power project.

PUK forces were driven out of Sulaimaniyah, 270 kilometres north of Baghdad, on Sept. 9 in a KDP offensive that began 10 days earlier and brought most of northern Iraq under its control. The offensive began when KDP forces, with help from the Iraqi army, captured the key city of Erbil from the PUK.

The Iraqi intervention was punished with U.S. missile attacks on Sept. 3 and 4 and led to an American military buildup in the Gulf.

A U.N. official in northern Iraq said the PUK had scored a strategic victory with the capture of Degala.

The KDP, however, denied that it had lost control of Degala and vowed to remain at its posts and defend Erbil, the "capital" of Iraqi Kurdistan.

"This information is false."

(Continued on page 7)

Netanyahu survives no-confidence vote

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's beleaguered government survived a no-confidence motion Monday from opposition parties accusing him of destroying the peace process with the Arabs.

"We express no-confidence in Mr. Netanyahu because he has no peace policy as we understand it," said Labour Party lawmaker David Libai, who was justice minister in the previous government that made peace with the Palestinians and Jordan.

Mr. Netanyahu survived by a 57-48 vote with two abstentions.

Foreign Minister David Levy, heckled repeatedly by opposition lawmakers, blamed the Palestinian National Authority (PNA)

for the clashes last month in which 78 people died.

The shooting erupted during Palestinian protests over Israel's opening of an archaeological tunnel near Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites. It capped months of growing Palestinian anger over Mr. Netanyahu's reluctance to implement outstanding aspects of the accords.

Mr. Levy said that "weapons being aimed against our soldiers cannot be justified under any circumstances."

"Those who did that harmed the peace process, undermined the trust of the citizens of this country regardless of their (political) views," Mr. Levy said.

"What is going to happen in the future? Will we see the same outburst of violence

every time we cannot reach agreement? Can we accept this?"

"You should be ashamed of yourself," shouted Abdul Wahab Darawshe, an Israeli-Arab lawmaker.

Mr. Netanyahu, who as opposition leader fought against the autonomy accords, defeated peace-maker Shimon Peres by less than one percentage point in the May election.

Although he is backed by a relatively comfortable majority of 68 out of the 120 Knesset members, his coalition is a volatile mix that includes extreme nationalists as well as centrists who favour far-reaching compromise with the Arabs.

Mr. Netanyahu has been harshly criticised for having alienated most of the

Arab countries that forged ties with Israel in recent years.

The opposition accuses him of also weakening Israel's ties to the United States and precipitating an economic crisis reflected in a virtual freeze of exports and foreign investment.

The Labour Party has been courting the powerful religious party Shas, whose leaders are dovish and whose 10 Knesset seats would suffice to either bring down the government or force Mr. Netanyahu to invite Labour into a broader coalition with more dovish policies.

Shas leaders have held meetings in recent days with Palestinian leaders. But the party voted with the government on Monday.

Truce panel reviews Lebanese complaint

NAQOURA, Lebanon (AFP) — The five-nation committee monitoring a ceasefire accord in South Lebanon met here Monday to study a Lebanese complaint over Israeli shelling that wounded 12 Lebanese civilians.

The committee, which groups Lebanon, Israel, the United States, Syria and France, met at the headquarters of U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in the border town of Naqoura, officials said.

Lebanon lodged its complaint after 12 members of the same family, including four women and at least three teenagers, were injured Friday when Israeli troops shelled villages in South Lebanon in retaliation for an attack by Hizbollah guerrillas.

Lebanon accused Israel of violating an April 26 ceasefire accord between Hizbollah and the Jewish state under which both sides agreed to spare civilians and Hizbollah is banned from attacking Israel from civilian areas.

Israel initially justified Friday's shelling by saying Hizbollah had violated the ceasefire first by firing mortars from inside the village of Baraashute.

However, it acknowledged after an investigation that "the source of the fire was from the edges of the village" and not from inside.

The Lebanese delegation

was to provide the committee with evidence that the guerrillas did not launch the attack from inside the village and that the Israeli shelling targeted civilian locations, inflicting casualties and property damage, an official source said.

Lebanon was also to warn against "dangerous policies" practised by the Israeli army since Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu came to power in June, the source said.

"Since then, the Israeli army has been intensifying its air and ground bombardment of civilian locations in South Lebanon under the pretext of striking the resistance," it said.

The committee has convened five times since Aug. 15, on three occasions to study complaints filed by Lebanon and Israel.

Lebanon has complained about injuries to two civilians, damage to property and the deportation of two families from the Israeli-occupied zone in South Lebanon.

Israel filed a complaint after two of its soldiers were killed in a Hizbollah rocket attack which it said was launched from a civilian area.

Monday's meeting was closed to the media at the request of the United States, which chairs the committee.

Parties decry U.S. ruling to extradite Abu Marzouk

AMMAN (J.T.) — Opposition parties in Parliament have issued a statement decrying the U.S. decision to extradite Musa Abu Marzouk, a member of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance group Hamas.

They described the decision as another crime committed by the U.S. administration against the Palestinian people.

"The opposition parties in the Lower House of Parliament held a meeting on Oct. 13 to study a U.S. court order to extradite Dr. Abu Marzouk to Israel and considered the move not as a judicial decision, but as one that was politically motivated taken under a Zionist influence and considerations related to the U.S. presidential election," the statement said.

Stating that Dr. Abu Marzouk's activities were not political in nature, the statement added that the Hamas activist can not be considered as a terrorist for undertaking resistance actions.

"The extradition order is yet another crime committed by the U.S. administration against the Palestinians and one that would trigger further acts of violence in the

region leaving adverse effects on U.S. relations with the Arab and Islamic nations," added the statement.

The Islamic Action Front (IAF) party issued a separate statement denouncing the extradition ruling as a flagrant violation of the American constitution since Dr. Abu Marzouk have been legally living in the United States without breaching any U.S. law.

The statement said the extradition order represents a direct encroachment on the personal freedom and civil rights of Dr. Abu Marzouk and a crime against the Palestinian people's basic right to carry out acts of resistance to occupation.

Meanwhile, newly formed Christian Arab Democratic Party (CADP) issued a statement stressing that there can be no peace in the region without Jerusalem, the creation of an independent Palestinian state and the termination of Jewish settlements in Arab lands.

The statement appealed to the Palestinian negotiators with Israel not to cede any of the Palestinian people's rights in their homeland.



CHECKPOINT: Two Palestinian policemen checking the permits of the Palestinian workers before they go to work in Israel through the Beit Hanoun checkpoint north of the Gaza Strip. After the last wave of the the clashes Israel said on Thursday that it would allow 35,000 married Palestinians over the age of 30 from the self-rule area to enter Israel to work. The decision followed the resumption of Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations earlier in the week (Reuters photo)

Taleban burn movies, to turn cinemas into mosques

KABUL (AFP) — The Taleban religious militia made a bonfire of Hindi movies at a central Kabul cinema as part of their campaign to apply strict Islamic principles.

"These films are un-Islamic, that is why we are burning them," a group of Taleban told AFP at the Zainab Cinema.

About 80 per cent of the films that used to be shown in Kabul cinemas were Indian-made, with the remainder from Hollywood and Iran.

"We have decided to turn this cinema into a mosque,"

the Taleban added.

These Taleban said they had converted all cinemas in their hometown, the southern provincial capital Kandahar.

The Zainab was one of about 15 operational cinemas in Kabul during the former regime of ex-communist President Najibullah, executed by the militia when they captured the capital on Sept. 27.

Many were destroyed in the years of factional fighting following the Mujahideen takeover of Kabul in April 1992, but a small number continued to function until early 1995, when they were closed down.

Ironically to appease the Taleban, who had just advanced to the outskirts of the capital.

After about three months a handful of cinemas reopened in Kabul and continued to provide cheap entertainment until July 1996 when Gulbuddin Hekmatyar returned to Kabul as prime minister.

Mr. Hekmatyar closed down the remaining cinemas as part of his own programme of Islamic reform.

No cinemas were functioning in Kabul when the

Taleban seized the capital 18 days ago.

A foreign journalist was slightly injured in the head during the bonfire of movies at Zainab cinema when some machinegun ammunition suddenly exploded.

It seemed that some AK-47 Kalashnikov bullets were inadvertently mixed up with the film stock.

A possible explanation for this was that some cinema used to allow Mujahideen of the ex-Kabul government entrance on payment of two AK-47 bullets in lieu of cash.

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Businessman seeks Kuwaiti speakership

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) — Wealthy Kuwaiti businessman and former Finance Minister Jasssem Al Kharafi will run for the key position of speaker in the new parliament, newspapers said on Monday.

Mr. Kharafi, who was elected in last week's poll to the 50-seat national assembly, or parliament, will compete for the post against Ahmad Al Saadoun, an independent who was speaker of the last assembly and who retained his seat.

"I am delighted to inform you that I have decided to nominate myself for the speaker of the parliament," Mr. Kharafi, who heads one of the country's leading contracting and trading companies, told reporters.

Pro-government Deputy Kharafi, who was finance minister in the late 1980s, said he had received "encouragement and support" to run for speaker from other members of the new national assembly.

Both candidates have been campaigning hard in recent

days to win the support of members of parliament (MPs), who are due to vote for the speaker and deputy speaker during the first parliamentary session on Oct. 20.

Under the constitution, the speaker is elected for a four-year term by an absolute majority of MPs, including members of the cabinet, present at the first sitting.

The speaker is responsible for keeping order in parliament, and if there are an equal number of votes, the speaker's bloc wins.

Diplomats said the speaker also plays a key mediating role between parliament and the government.

They said tensions between the last parliament and the government were often deflated after meetings between Mr. Saadoun and the crown prince and prime minister, Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah.

But the diplomats added that the new parliament, which is dominated by pro-government MPs, will be more "docile" than its predecessor, where Islamists formed the dominant bloc.

Newly elected Kuwaiti deputies on Monday met informally for the first time to try to thrash out their demands for the new cabinet being formed by the prime minister.

Some 35 members of the newly elected 50-seat National Assembly ended the gathering, calling for a strong-minded cabinet, but failed to agree on precise demands, MPs said.

"The general feeling was that deputies would like a government which can make decisions and represent the whole country," said liberal MP Abdullah Al Naibari, after the two-hour discussion.

Sheikh Saad, who was reappointed premier on Saturday, was continuing consultations on Monday before choosing his ministers.

Mr. Naibari said the meeting of MPs was "amicable" and, as well as drawing up proposals for the cabinet, was aimed at developing cooperation between the

new members before the first official sitting on Oct. 20.

Islamist Shiite MP Adnan Abdul Samad, who was reelected in last week's elections, said the new parliament seemed "weaker" than in the past four years because it failed to nail down specific demands.

"In 1992 there were precise demands," said Mr. Abdul Samad, whereas at Monday's meeting MPs could not agree on issues such as how many deputies they should call to be represented in the cabinet.

In the parliament elected in 1992, Islamist MPs formed the dominant bloc, but pro-government deputies are now the most powerful group after general elections held last week.

The cabinet can have up to 16 members, of which at least one must be an elected MP. In the last parliament, up to six MPs held ministerial posts at any one time.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Egypt to acquire more F-16 fighters

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt will acquire more U.S. F-16 fighters and Apache helicopters to boost its air power, the commander of the nation's air force was quoted as saying Monday. Lieutenant General Ahmad Shafiq told the state-owned daily Al Akhbar that the new warplanes will be equipped with "the most sophisticated technology ever available in the world's arsenals." He did not say how many planes would be received. The F-16 fighter jet already is a mainstay of Egypt's air force. Gen. Shafiq said the Apaches and SH-2G helicopters, which are used in anti-tank warfare, are expected to be delivered soon with other equipment including advanced simulators for training Egyptian pilots. He said Egypt will continue depending on Washington for supplying its armed forces because "super technology provided by the U.S. is not necessarily provided by others." Since Egypt's peace treaty with Israel in 1979, the United States has become Egypt's main weapons supplier, replacing the former Soviet Union and other communist states.

Cairo schools closed for fear of meningitis

CAIRO (R) — Schools in a south Cairo suburb have been closed for several days after a pair of twins died of meningitis, residents said on Monday. "Thirteen-year-old Michael and his twin sister died after being infected by the meningitis virus," one of their close acquaintances said. "Doctors privately admitted it was meningitis and were treating them accordingly," she added. "But the official report did not concede it." In a televised news conference on Sunday Health Minister Ismail Sallam dismissed the reports as a rumour, saying the deaths were a result of a brain virus. The ministry, however, ordered schools in the luxurious Cairo suburb of Maadi closed for two days "just to reassure parents." Residents said the schools would be closed until the weekend. Other cases from Maadi schools have been admitted to intensive care and vaccines have disappeared after a rush by scared parents, residents said.

Bullet-proof vest would have saved Rabin

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin would still be alive if he had worn a bullet-proof vest on the night of his shooting last November, police ballistics tests showed on Monday. Police reproduced two cartridges — for the bullets extracted from Rabin's body — at a research laboratory at Nahal Soreg near Tel Aviv before carrying out test firing in the same conditions as the night of the murder. The tests proved beyond doubt that Rabin would have been safe if he had been wearing a bullet-proof vest, police said. The prime minister was shot in the back at point-blank range by an extreme right-wing Jew, Yigal Amir, after an outdoor peace rally in Tel Aviv on Nov. 4, Amir, who opposed Rabin's land-for-peace accords with the Palestinians, used a Beretta pistol with bullets with metal tips to strengthen their impact. He has since been jailed for life.

20 wounded as in Egyptian squabble

CAIRO (AFP) — A squabble between two pre-school children in south Egypt led to a clash with machine-guns between their Coptic Christian and Muslim families in which 20 people were wounded on Monday, police said. The incident took place in Nazlat Mustafa village in Asyut, almost 400 kilometres south of Cairo. The children were playing when they got into a fight and their fathers Kamal Saeed Butros, a 60-year-old Copt, and Mohammed Atef Hassan, 37, a Muslim, joined in. Other family members also joined in and the squabble turned into an all-out war with machine-guns, police said. Twenty people, including children, women and the two fathers, were injured and taken to a nearby hospital.

Egypt to launch development of pyramids area

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt will launch this week a 45 million pound (\$13.2 million) project to develop the area around the Giza Pyramids, Culture Minister Farouk Hosni said in statements published on Monday. The work will take one year and will involve the construction of a special visitors' ringroad around the Giza plateau, home to three of Egypt's most famous pyramids, the government dailies Al Ahram and Al Akhbar reported. Al Akhbar said the eight-kilometre ringroad alone will cost 30 million pounds. Experts from the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Egyptian antiquities engineering centre and the supreme antiquities council drew up the scheme over the past three years. The project also involves the setting up of parking lots, access gates to the pyramids plateau and cultural centres.

| JORDAN TELEVISION | |
|--|--|
| Tel. 773111-19 | |
| PROGRAMME TWO | |
| 14:05.....Budgie | Tel. 637440. |
| 14:30.....I Love Lucy | De la Salle Church Tel. 661757. |
| 15:00.....Sciences Cartoon | Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366 |
| 15:15.....Magazine — Montage | Anglican Church Tel. 652826. |
| 16:00.....At The Zoo | Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331. |
| 16:30.....ALF | Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261. |
| 17:00.....News Flash | St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751. |
| 17:01.....Fun With Physics | Amman International Church Tel. 652526 |
| 17:15.....Road To Avoles | Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328. |
| 18:00 Serie — La Lumiere des Jusies | German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457 |
| 19:00.....Le Journal | The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932. |
| 19:15 Magazine — Extra Large | Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691. |
| 19:30.....News Headlines | The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295 |
| 19:35.....Murphy Brown | English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190. |
| 20:00.....Man Alive | |
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| 23:59.....Are You Being Served | |
| PRAYER TIMES | |
| 04:1.....Fajr | |
| 05:35.....(Sunrise) Duha | |
| 11:22.....Dhuhr | |
| 14:37.....Asr | |
| 17:09.....Maghreb | |
| 18:26.....Isha | |
| CHURCHES | |
| St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swefleh. Tel. 810740 | |
| Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785. | |
| St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590 | |
| Church of the Annunciation | |

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

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| 14:05.....Budgie | Tel. 637440. |
| 14:30.....I Love Lucy | De la Salle Church Tel. 661757. |
| 15:00.....Sciences Cartoon | Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366 |
| 15:15.....Magazine — Montage | Anglican Church Tel. 652826. |
| 16:00.....At The Zoo | Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331. |
| 16:30.....ALF | Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261. |
| 17:00.....News Flash | St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751. |
| 17:01.....Fun With Physics | Amman International Church Tel. 652526 |
| 17:15.....Road To Avoles | Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328. |
| 18:00 Serie — La Lumiere des Jusies | German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457 |
| 19:00.....Le Journal | The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932. |
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| Monday | Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. |
| every Sunday | |
| Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every | |
| Monday | |
| MARKET PRICES | |
| Pepperflower price in fils per kg. | |
| Apple..... | 700/500 |
| Ananana..... | 500/500 |
| Ananana (mulhammar)..... | 420/420 |
| Ananana (imported)..... | 820/600 |
| Cabbage..... | 130/80 |
| Carrot..... | 280/140 |
| Cauliflower..... | 350/220 |
| Cucumber (large)..... | 180/100 |
| Cucumber (small)..... | 340/200 |
| Eggplant..... | 240/140 |
| Garlic..... | 700/450 |
| Grapes..... | 480/150 |
| Kumava..... | 600/400 |
| Lemon..... | 350/200 |
| Lemon (large)..... | 200/180 |
| Lemon (small)..... | 340/250 |
| Mulukhiyah..... | 200/110 |
| Onion (green)..... | 280/160 |
| Onion (dry)..... | 140/88 |
| Potato..... | 950/550 |
| Pumpkin..... | 580/450 |
| Peas..... | 680/600 |
| Pepper (hot)..... | 300/180 |
| Pepper (sweet)..... | 340/220 |
| Pomegranate..... | 380/220 |
| Potato..... | 300/180 |
| Pumpkin..... | 330/200 |
| Spring Bean..... | 650/450 |



Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour Monday visits an injured Palestinian at the Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery. Centre Director Dr. Daoud Hanania explains treatment procedures. The minister is accompanied by various government officials (Petra photo)

Injured Palestinians treated in Kingdom hospitals

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery (ACHSS) is currently treating nine Palestinians injured in last month's confrontations with Israeli forces and Jordanian specialists have offered to treat them free of charge, Centre Director Daoud Hanania said Monday.

Dr. Hanania told the Jordan Times that the nine suffer from serious injuries and are currently being treated for fractures, brain injuries, intestinal problems and other complaints which demand extensive work and time to heal, probably more than a month, including rehabilitation.

He said that the nine were admitted to the hospital on Sept. 29 and are being treated in response to a request by His Majesty King Hussein to Jordanian medical institutions to

provide humanitarian aid to Palestinians.

Deputising for Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour Monday visited the hospitalised Palestinians to wish them a speedy recovery.

Dr. Ensour expressed his appreciation to Dr. Hanania and the hospital staff for their efforts to treat and care for the injured.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Hanania sent a letter to the Palestinian health minister expressing the hospital's availability to treat those injured in recent confrontations.

Some of the injured have been treated for paraplegia and hemiplegia as bullets were found to have penetrated their bodies, Dr. Hanania said.

Dr. Ensour was accompanied on the visit by the Health Ministry's Secretary General Dr. Hashem Jaddouh.



SUDANESE MINISTER OF HEALTH ARRIVES IN AMMAN: Sudanese Minister of Health Ihsan Ghabshawi arrived in Amman Monday morning on a four-day official visit to Jordan. He was received by Ministry of Health Secretary General Hashem Jaddouh. Ms. Ghabshawi will hold talks with Minister of Health Aref Bataineh and visit a number of medical centres to study their various services. Ms. Ghabshawi said that this visit is dedicated to reactivating the health cooperation agreement signed between Sudan and Jordan last September, as well as discussing the possibility of concluding other comprehensive and complementary agreements, lauding Jordan as possessing a developed health field (Petra photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

International Motor Show begins

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein inaugurated the International Motor Show which will run through Oct. 20 at the Amman International Motor Show.

Arab Environment Day focuses on water

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan celebrated Arab Environment Day which this year hails the slogan "Water means life, don't pollute it." The General Corporation for the Environmental Protection Information Bureau Head Fawzi Ekour said that Jordan takes protection of the environment as a serious concern and that His Majesty King Hussein has called for international conferences dealing with environmental protection.

Cold front expected to slacken Wednesday

AMMAN (Petra) — The weather will continue to feel the effects of the cold front which Saturday began its traversal over Jordan. General forecasts call for rain until Wednesday when a gradual rise in temperatures is expected and winds will be easterly moderate.

Jordanian delegation heads to Baghdad

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian delegation representing the land and maritime transportation sector will head to Baghdad at the end of this month to discuss bilateral cooperation in the field of transportation.

Engineers association threatens strike

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) has called on all its members to participate in a sit-in to demand higher salaries and threatened to later organise a strike if the government does not respond positively.

The sit-in, to be held Saturday in front of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, was announced in several Arabic dailies and weeklies and is considered by the JEA as a "final warning" to the government before "further action."

According to the announcement, the engineers employed in the public sector are asking for a 180 per cent increase in

their basic monthly wage, which, JEA sources say, currently amounts to JD150.

After allowances are added, the average monthly salary of a public sector engineer nears JD215, an amount about which engineers complain.

The protest aims at gaining back a series of financial and other benefits which were revoked under government regulations enforced in 1988, JEA acting President Hosni Abu Ghida told the Jordan Times.

"Our engineers used to enjoy better salaries and working conditions in 1988 than [they do] nowadays," Mr. Abu Ghida said, adding that monthly wages were lowered from JD400 to JD 270.

He said the government resorted to such cuts because of the surplus of engineers in the Kingdom, but added that the JEA does not intend to accept the market's oversupply as justification for "unfair treatment."

While accusing the government of not having responded to the engineers' requests so far, Mr. Abu Ghida said the association, which counts 36,000 members, intends to "start serious negotiations with the government."

Other requests forwarded by the JEA include the advancement of engineers to higher levels of the public sector employees' scale and the abolition of some forms of discrimination against engineers employed in certain min-

istries. Public sector employees are classified according to a scale running from tenth (the lowest) to first (the highest) grade.

Before 1988, a new graduate engineer could start his/her career as a public employee from grade five, while today he/she is hired as a "sixth grade employee," with the consequent loss in benefits and allowances.

The JEA also charged the government with "discrimination" between engineers employed in different institutions.

Calling for "fairer treatment for all engineers," JEA sources said that engineers employed by the Ministry of Education, for example, are given 25 per cent more allowances than

engineers employed in other ministries.

The JEA, whose president Luth Shubeilat was charged with slander against the Royal family and is currently serving a prison sentence, is already planning further actions in case the association's requests are not met by the authorities.

In fact, the association is also organising a protest walk from the JEA's headquarters in Shmeisani to the Prime Ministry on Oct. 26 and a strike to be held at a date to be announced.

"We wish that we were not forced to go on strike," Mr. Abu Ghida told the Jordan Times, "but it seems that it is the only way to regain our rights."

Minister of education delivers talk on literacy

AMMAN (Petra) — The rate of illiteracy in the Kingdom varies according to geography and gender, Minister of Education Munther Masri said Monday.

In a lecture delivered at the Royal Cultural Centre, the minister offered these and other statistics such as that the enrolment rate of students, six to 12 years old, in primary schools this year is complete, whereas the rate of the 12 to 16 year old age group's enrolment in schools is estimated at 90 per cent.

However, the rate of student enrolment at non-compulsory secondary schools ranges between 65 and 70 per cent and that those between 18 and 24 years of age, enrolling at various colleges and universities, stands at 30 per cent, said Dr. Masri.

Referring to illiteracy, Dr. Masri estimated a 12 per cent figure but added that

ministry-run literacy and adult education centres are contributing to an annual reduction of one per cent.

However, illiteracy varies with geography and gender from a possible 30 per cent in one area to eight per cent in another, the minister said.

Jordan introduced compulsory education in the early 1950s, Dr. Masri said, and that whereas previously children were obligated to remain in school for a six year period, compulsory education was extended to nine years in 1964 and to 10 years in 1988.

Dr. Masri pointed out that the latest statistics showed that there is one teacher for every 20 students in public schools.

The Ministry of Education made an announcement at the commencement of the current school year that 1.3 million students are enrolled in the country's 4,000 schools.

Visiting Islamist seeks to restore calm

AMMAN (Petra) — Visiting leader of the Algerian Islamic Society Movement (AISM) Sheikh Mahfouz Nihnah Monday and Chairman of the House Arab and International Affairs Committee in Parliament Fawzi Toumeih organised a meeting with parliamentary bloc heads and representatives of the Lower House.

The group discussed issues of common concern to Jordan and Algeria.

Sheikh Nihnah, who had earlier met government officials and the speakers of the two houses of Parliament, said that his delegation's visit afforded him the opportunity to study Jordanian democracy.

He also commented upon dialogues among the various parties which he said he will describe to Algerian leaders at home.

Sheikh Nihnah said his visit was directed toward shedding light on the Algerian crisis, and that his country was going through a political transformation in which painful events have been taking place and impeding development.

He described Algeria as both neighbouring Europe and at the heart of the Maghreb and as such attempting to protect its national identity and establish democracy.

Approximately 60,000 people have lost their lives in the recent spate of violence, Sheikh Nihnah said and cited the murder of seven Christian monks as evidence that Algeria faces group menaces intended to destabilise the country.

Referring to his own movement he described the AISM as not a party to violent acts, but a catalyst for restoring calm and ending the conflict.

"War-mongers and those who fish in muddy waters for their own selfish ends are the perpetrators of these on going acts of violence which is also aimed at isolating the Eastern Arabs from the Arab Maghreb," Sheikh Nihnah declared.

He urged Jordan's parliament to extend a helping hand to Algeria in its struggle to establish political pluralism and democracy.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

* "Yellow Bread" at the British Council at 5:00 p.m.

* American film "Sole Hero" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

LECTURE

* "Introduction to Project: Agricultural Extension and Promotion of Production" by Mr. Elmar Locher and Khalid Sbaibi at Goethe-Institut at 6:30 p.m.

France to declare 1997 as 'Jordan year'

PARIS (J.T.) — Preparations are under way to mark the Oct. 23 visit to the Kingdom by French President Jacques Chirac.

These will include the organisation of a series of cultural and tourist exhibits in France highlighting Jordan's historic import as well as its present achievements in culture, industry, tourism and arts, Jordanian Ambassador to France Fawaz Sharaf stated Monday.

He added, in a statement, that the functions which reflect the two countries' strong ties are being organised by official institutions in both countries.

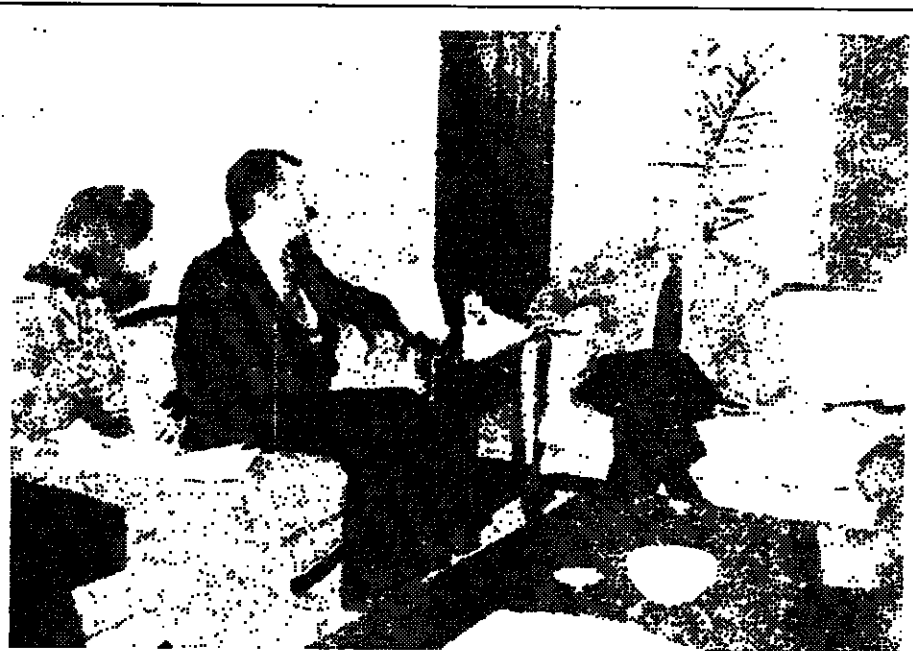
Sharif Sharaf said that the exhibits are also designated as part of Jordanian/French plans to nominate 1997 as the Jordan year in France.

Paris is partaking of these activities and will host a contemporary Jordanian art exhibition, said the ambassador who further stated that samples of traditional crafts and artefacts excavated in Jordan will be other items on display.

This exhibit is scheduled to open in March of 1997 and Sharif Sharaf said that major French institutions will host varied exhibits linked to Jordan such as handicrafts, carpets, regional foods, paintings, and a small library displaying books on Jordan as well as posters encouraging the French public to visit the Kingdom.

The Arab World Institute in Paris will also host an exhibit of Jordanian artefacts slated to last three days, said the ambassador who added that the exhibit will be organised in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities.

The artefacts were excavated in a series of digs held at Jerash as well as other archaeological sites in Jordan and will go on display in June of 1997, said the ambassador, who voiced his appreciation of the French government's cooperation in promoting Jordan to the public.



MINISTER OF EDUCATION RECEIVES FRENCH AMBASSADOR: Minister of Education Munther Masri Monday received the French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajonet and discussed cooperation in educational and cultural fields, particularly the teaching of French language in Jordan. Attending the meeting was Ministry of Education Secretary General Izzat Jaradat (Petra photo)

Woman confesses to murder of best friend

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police Monday detained a 35-year-old Mafrqa woman in connection with the death of a friend in Khalidieh, a village located between Zarqa and Mafrqa, according to Public Security Department (PSD) reports.

The report said the woman, identified only as F.B., confessed to killing her 42-year-old former closest friend following an argument. The report gave no details as to the nature of the argument.

Mafrqa police were informed by neighbours that a 42-year-old woman, who was not identified in the report, was found murdered in her house.

An autopsy performed on the victim indicated that she received several

blows to the head which caused her death.

"The suspect pushed the victim to the wall against which she hit her head and then fell," the report said.

It added that the accused then brought a metal bar and allegedly struck the victim several times on the head.

The report said that the woman was transferred to the Prosecutor General for further investigations.

Meanwhile, police in Ajloun are investigating the death of a 19-year-old woman who drowned in a well in the Asim area Sunday, PSD reports said.

According to the report, the victim's mother informed authorities that she asked her daughter Zohour Hussein to fill up a bucket of water from the well, "but she went and did not return."

The report said when the

mother went to check for her daughter she discovered her inside the well.

Officials told the Jordan Times Monday that the opening of the well was half a metre and that it was four metres deep.

The official would not elaborate on how the woman might have fallen into the well.

In Jabal Jofeh, in Amman, a four-year-old child survived a 10-metre fall from the window of a building and was listed in critical condition, official reports said.

The report gave no details to how the toddler, Iman Jamal, fell from the window.

Police said they are launching inquiries into both incidents.

N. Zealand government takes flexible stance on coalition

WELLINGTON (R) — New Zealand's caretaker government reassured investors Monday after an inconclusive general election and signalled it would be flexible in coalition talks with populist Maori Leader Winston Peters.

Finance Minister Bill Birch said a widening of the central bank's target range for inflation may well be on the agenda for coalition talks, which could drag on for weeks or months.

He said the Conservative National Party government, in power since 1990, wanted to maintain the "broad mix" of policies which have produced the strongest economic growth in a genera-

tion. "That's not to say there would not be some tweaking of those policies. We've never claimed that they're perfect, and indeed during the campaign we argued ourselves that they needed to be built on as we look ahead," Mr. Birch said in an interview to Reuters financial television.

National and its allies won 53 seats, while the Labour Party and left-wing alliance gained 50. Peters' New Zealand first party was left holding the balance of power with 17.

Mr. Peters has refused to say if he will embrace National or Labour, which campaigned on promises to

share the fruits of economic recovery with more funding for health and education.

While Mr. Peters avoided the media, his deputy Tau Henare retracted a pre-election comment that he personally could not work with National unless it dumped Prime Minister Jim Bolger. Mr. Birch and Health Minister Jenny Shipley.

Mr. Henare said the remark had been a "bungle" and he would be ruled by the decision of the party deputies, but added he would find it "very, very, very difficult" to work with National's leaders.

Financial markets took the uncertainty in their stride, with the New Zealand dol-

lar, shares and bonds all firming. Traders said there was relief at the poor showing of the alliance, which favours higher tariffs and a big increase in taxes and spending.

National's Bolger and Labour Leader Helen Clark have both said they aim to stitch together a coalition, and Peters said Sunday he expected a "bidding war" over policy.

Mr. Peters favours limiting foreign stakes in "strategic" New Zealand assets to 25 per cent and wants to reverse the recent NZ\$2 billion (US\$1.4 billion) sale of state-owned Forestry Corporation, something neither National nor Labour could accept.

But markets drew some encouragement from his election-night comments on the need to maintain stability, run budget surpluses and repay foreign debt.

New Zealand First and Labour both favour a widening of the central bank's zero to two per cent inflation target, although their prescriptions differ.

Mr. Birch's comments were the first sign the government may at least discuss changes to the mandate of the reserve bank, which has narrowly failed to keep inflation in the target band this year but still commands huge respect in financial markets.

Asked about the possibility of prolonged political stalemate, Mr. Birch said: "I can understand the market's apprehension about that, but I think the election result indicated strong support for the direction in which the economy is going."



New Zealand's Labour Party leader Helen Clark (left) welcomes newly elected member of parliament Dover Samules Monday, to the first caucus meeting since the general election at the weekend. The Labour Party and left-wing Alliance gained 50 seats, with the Nationals and its allies winning 53. The New Zealand First party was left holding the balance of power with 17 seats (Reuters photo)

Fighting between Philippine army, rebels leaves 10 dead

COTABATO, Philippines (AFP) — Fighting between government troops and Muslim guerrillas has left 10 people dead and 81 injured and jeopardized planned peace talks, officials of both sides said Monday.

The military hit several villages with artillery and mortar shells Saturday and Sunday in response to two dawn raids by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), triggering an evacuation of 750 families, the army and the MILF said.

It was the first major outbreak of guerrilla activity in the southern Mindanao region since the government signed a peace settlement ending a 24-year separatist rebellion by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNL) last month. The headline MILF has ignored the peace deal.

The clashes around a Japan-funded irrigation dam project in the town of Carmen left four guerrillas and six civilians dead along with 20 injured, army Lieutenant Noel Detoyato told reporters.

Hospital officials said 81 people, many of them civilians, were treated, mostly for minor injuries.

The regional military command had dispatched an investigating team to determine why most casualties were civilians. Lt. Detoyato said.

MILF spokesman Ghazali Jaafar denounced the military offensive, which he warned could have "derailed the efforts of the government and the MILF to start peace talks."

In an interview over Roman Catholic Church-run radio station DXMS here, Mr. Jaafar demanded that the government pull out a battalion of infantrymen securing the dam project site.

He said the military fired at least 40 mortar rounds on six villages, and that five houses were destroyed.

The army said the MILF started the fighting by sending two 200-men guerrilla sorties which the military unit repulsed at dawn Saturday and Sunday.

"We will not withdraw because we are mandated by the constitution to protect a government project," Lieutenant Detoyato added. After Manila signed a peace settlement with the MNL in September, President Fidel Ramos formed a government panel to hold peace talks with the MILF, which split from the MNL in 1977 and has about 10,000 fighters.

However, contacts have not gone beyond the preliminary stage.

The head of the Manila panel for the proposed negotiations, retired General Fortunato Abat, told the radio that he has yet to

receive a military report on the fighting, which the army said affected several villages near the towns of Carmen, Pagalungan and Pikit.

He appealed for calm, "especially as the government and the MILF are preparing for formal peace talks."

Nur Misuari, the MNL leader who has since been elected governor of a four-province autonomous region of Muslim Mindanao, has offered his services as an intermediary in negotiations with his former comrades.

The MILF, one of two remaining Muslim rebel groups in Mindanao, has been harassing the 3.5 billion-peso (\$133.3 million) project since construction began in 1991, alleging the government did not adequately compensate Muslim families who owned the land.

Work on the dam project, funded by the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan, was halted in late 1994. At one point, the MILF held seven South Korean engineers hostage for seven days, forcing the civilian contractor to pull out.

Ramos has deployed an army engineering battalion to finish the work by the end of 1996.

Portugal socialists win Azores, lose Madeira vote

LISBON (R) — Portugal's ruling Socialists broke a 20-year losing streak in regional elections in the Azores islands Sunday, but they may not have won enough seats to form a local government, the official count showed.

In Madeira, the other semi-autonomous island group that also went to the polls Sunday, the Conservative Social Democrats maintained their grip on power.

The Socialist Party won 45.8 per cent of the vote in the Azores against 41 per cent for the Social Democrats who have governed the mid-Atlantic islands since the first elections to follow the restoration of democracy in Portugal in 1974.

But due to the distribution of seats, the

Socialists will have 24 representatives in the islands' 52-seat parliament, the same number as the Social Democrats.

The balance of power will be held by the small, right-wing Popular Party which won three seats, according to the official count which must still be confirmed by the country's Electoral Commission. The remaining seat went to a Communist-led alliance.

The Social Democrats, ousted from national government in Lisbon by the Socialists of Prime Minister Antonio Guterres in elections in Oct. 1995, boosted their percentage of the vote in Madeira, a sub-tropical archipelago off North Africa.

Burmese junta warns of tougher measures

RANGOON (AFP) — Burma's military leaders have warned of new security measures against what they call lackeys of foreign powers who are responsible for rising crime, the official media reported Monday.

Although Burma's military rulers did not identify any specific person, analysts said the reports referred to the political opposition of Aung San Suu Kyi, who is routinely denounced as a "destructive" and "criminal" acting in the interest of foreign powers.

"There have been moves to deliberately disrupt the security of the people," Lieutenant General Tin Oo, army chief of staff, was quoted as saying in the official media.

Mr. Tin Oo, who is a member of the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), said there had been a sharp increase in crime in recent months, due to the efforts of traitors in the pay of foreign governments.

He added that a special committee would from Tuesday launch "serious security measures."

Mr. Tin Oo's announcement came after the military authorities reinstalled barricades Saturday at the approaches to Aung San Suu Kyi's home to stop her from holding a party congress and addressing her supporters.

An earlier blockade went hand in hand with the arrests of 537 supporters of her National League for Democracy (NLD), according to official sources, although NLD officials said the number was closer to 800 people.

The armed blockade remained in place Monday, although there was no comment on the barricade in the official press.



Ursula Stenzel, top candidate of the conservative People's Party (OeVP) in a European parliament election looks at party leader Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schuessel (right) at the party's headquarters Sunday. The OeVP was expected to be pleased with a result putting it slightly ahead of its Social Democratic coalition partner who slumped into an historic low (Reuters photo)

Austrians flock to far-right fold in Europarlament polls

VIENNA (R) — Austrian voters, stung by sharp budget cuts designed to prepare the country for Europe's single currency, flocked to the fold of the far right Sunday and dealt a crushing blow to the ruling Social Democrats.

Computer projections after the country's first European parliament elections showed the Freedom Party scoring a record high and consolidating its position as the European Union's most successful Nationalist Party. The party campaigned strongly against greater European integration.

Chancellor Franz Vranitzky's social democrats suffered their worst result in a nationwide poll since Austria first embraced democracy in 1918.

"This great result is an historic step for us," triumphant far-right leader Joerg Haider said in a first reaction to his party's 28 per cent showing.

The Freedom Party scored 6.3 points higher than last December's general election and became the most popular party for the first time in three of the country's nine provinces.

Mr. Haider predicted a new pact between Conservative parties in the European parliament by the end of the year to fight against the Maastricht Treaty on closer EU integration.

He vowed his party would be headed for victory in the country's next general election in 1999 unless Vranitzky stepped down. "If the government doesn't change its policies, it will meet its Waterloo at the next election," he said.

But a defiant Vranitzky dismissed suggestions his coalition with the Conservative People's Party should change course, blaming low turnout for his party's 29.3 per cent score.

"This is a clear defeat," he told Austrian television. "But I do not see this result as a call by the electorate to change the composition of the government."

Austrian television said voter turnout was 68 per cent, far below the usual participation in national polls.

While acknowledging that voters had sent a protest over the introduction in March of a two-year austerity budget, Vranitzky said Austria had no choice but to remain inside the EU.

"I will not change the policies I believe are correct," he said. "Joining the EU was the right decision."

Austria joined the European bloc 22 months ago following a referendum in which two-thirds of voters backed membership. But Austrians have turned their wrath on the EU, blaming membership for a series of economic ills, welfare cuts

and tax hikes. Anger has risen over Austria's annual net contributions to the EU of 15 billion schillings (\$1.4 billion), mounting job losses and rising insolvencies amid a general economic slump.

With 80 per cent of the vote counted, projections had the People's Party (OeVP), Vranitzky's junior coalition partner, inching ahead of the social democrats with 29.5 per cent.

OeVP leader and foreign minister Wolfgang Schuessel hailed his party's result as its best showing in more than 30 years.

Social democrat backing plummeted 8.5 points from last December's score of 38 per cent.

The party lost one seat to take a total of seven of the 21 seats allocated to Austria in Strasbourg's European parliament.

The Conservatives gained one to hold seven as well. The far right gained one to hold six seats, while the leftist greens held on to their one seat, projections showed.

The beleaguered social democrats also lost their hold on Vienna City Hall for the first time since the end of World War II in a separate election for the country's most powerful regional assembly and will be forced to enter coalition talks.

Christopher urges both sides to secure peace in Angola

LUANDA (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said here Monday it is imperative that both sides in the bloody Angolan conflict work quickly to fulfill their obligations under the Lusaka peace accord.

"It is imperative that both sides move rapidly to meet their obligations," Mr. Christopher said after landing in this southwest African nation.

"I call on President (Jose Eduardo) Dos Santos and Dr. (Jonas) Savimbi to fulfill their commitment to meet in Luanda as soon as possible," the top U.S. diplomat said.

The International Community expects full compliance with the peace accord and will not tolerate any resumption of conflict," Mr. Christopher added.

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs George Moose was to meet Monday with Dr. Savimbi, head of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), to press him to implement the accord with the government.

"We are obviously concerned about delays in the peace process," Mr. Moose said. "That is a concern I will be registering in my direct conversation with Dr. Savimbi," he added.

After meeting with Mr. Christopher, Mr. Dos Santos told him, "your presence will be an encouragement to speed national reconciliation."

In spite of all the delays we continue to be committed to implementation of the Lusaka agreement," he added.

The president said he hoped "that once peace is established, economic relations will develop" between the United States and Angola.

Mr. Christopher said Mr. Dos Santos "took major steps to bring peace," he added that "now, as we reach the end of this process, we need to accelerate."

Mr. Moose was to travel to the UNITA stronghold in central Angola.

Dr. Savimbi has refused to come to Luanda to meet Mr. Christopher, citing security reasons. Mr. Moose also expects to meet with UNITA generals who have been transferred to Luanda as part of a program to integrate them with the new Angolan National Army.

President Dos Santos said the UNITA generals who had come to Luanda were not the top rank and he stressed "the need to take some more positive steps."

The U.S. government is growing increasingly irritated with the attitude of Dr. Savimbi but does not wish to cut ties with him, a senior U.S. official said Sunday on the eve of Mr.

Christopher's visit.

The state department official said Dr. Savimbi has not respected all his commitments as part of the peace process in Angola, while "the government is upholding its end of the bargain for the most part."

UNITA enjoyed the backing of Washington during the civil war there. UNITA is blamed for delays in implementing the 1994 Lusaka peace accords, providing for a joint military and National Unity government, which put an end to two decades of civil war in Angola.

On Friday, the U.N. Security Council threatened to impose trade and travel sanctions against UNITA from next month in a bid to step up pressure on the former rebels to comply with the accords.

In a resolution adopted unanimously, the 15-member council said it was ready to consider imposing trade sanctions and travel restrictions against unita unless the U.N. chief of mission reported by Nov. 20 that it was complying.

Mr. Christopher's three-hour stop in Luanda came on his way back to Washington after a week-long tour of five African nations. His visit marked the first by a U.S. secretary of state to Angola.

Britain considers bugging prison cells

LONDON (R) — British Home Secretary (Interior Minister) Michael Howard has secretly approved a plan to bug prison cells to help solve major crimes, a newspaper said Monday. "The aim is to catch some of the country's most dangerous criminals boasting about their exploits — or setting up new crimes," the Daily Mail, a popular tabloid, said. The Home Office (Interior Ministry) refused to confirm the report. "It is not something we would discuss," a spokesman told Reuters. The newspaper said details of the bugging plan, which would target murderers, sex offenders and armed robbers, were understood to have emerged in documents disclosed to the lawyer defending a man facing further proceedings after being taped. It is part of the ruling Conservatives' plan to get tough on crime, an issue which is sure to emerge in the campaign leading up to the next general election in seven months. The ruling Conservative are trailing the opposition Labour Party by 20 points in opinion polls. The Daily Mail added that some prison guards are so concerned about the alleged plan, which is aimed at providing new leads on criminal cases, that they have written to the Prison Officer's Association. "This has been kept very secret, but we are concerned about the legal position and the relationship between prisoners and prison officers which we have worked hard to build," the newspaper quoted a letter from prison guards as saying. Civil liberty groups described bugging as an invasion of privacy. They also questioned whether such information would be admissible in court.

Russian guards got wrong volcano in report

MOSCOW (R) — Russian border guards probably made a mistake when they said a volcano in the Russian Far East had erupted for the first time in more than 70 years, ITAR-TASS news agency said Monday. TASS said a weekend report from the Border Guard Service about an eruption of the supposedly dormant Kamchatka peninsula had not been confirmed. Experts believed another volcano, Karymsky, had simply become more active. Stanislav Balesta, head of the Kamchatka centre monitoring volcanic and seismic activity, told TASS Karymsky was spewing out molten lava and sending a column of smoke five kilometres into the air. There were no reports of injuries or damage. Karymsky started erupting in January this year, blasting hot ash about seven kilometres into the air.

Nurse dies of 'natural' causes

SINGAPORE (AFP) — A Chinese nurse working in Singapore died over the weekend after suffering from a fit while having sex with her boyfriend, police said Monday. Lu Fang, 29, died in a hospital where she was rushed Saturday night after being seized by a fit while making love with her Singaporean boyfriend at his suburban flat. "She's got a history of fits," according to a police spokesman. Assistant Superintendent Douglas Yeo. "She had a fit while having intercourse." Mr. Yeo said police were still awaiting the coroner's report, adding that if the death resulted from natural causes, there would be no need for an autopsy. The Straits Times said Lu started to convulse while the couple was making love and was pronounced dead two hours later at Changi Hospital. Lu was employed as a staff nurse at another hospital, it said.

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Arms race on home stretch

THE just-published annual report of the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) casts an ominous shadow on the national priorities of both the developed and developing countries. The most concerned parties, naturally it seems, are in the Middle East, including the Gulf states and some of the North African nations. According to the findings of the Institute, certain countries in this region spend more on armament than the rest of the world in proportion to their population size and gross national product (GNP). The disproportionate investment in arms acquisition is taking place exactly at a time when these countries remain amongst the poorest with the exception of the Gulf states which account for half of the total expenditures on arms purchases by the Middle East.

Israel, Iran, Egypt and Syria respectively take the lead among the other regional states in military spending. Israel's official account of military costs do not take into consideration the undisclosed expenses covered by ministries other than the ministry of defence or the U.S. annual military assistance which is to the tune of \$3 billion per annum. The huge spending by the Gulf states, on the other hand, can be viewed as a direct offshoot of the Gulf crisis that ensued from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the feeling of insecurity that oil-rich states still experience six years later.

Cynics still propagate the proposition that the entire Gulf crisis was carefully manipulated and orchestrated in order to force the GCC states into believing in this sense of insecurity whereby they end up recycling their petrodollars back into the coffers of the Western arms producers.

But wherever the truth lies, it remains an indisputable fact that the Gulf states are spending more than ever on arms acquisition mostly from the West. The hostility that continues to exist between the GCC members and Iran no doubt contributes to the instability and insecurity of the region especially as Tehran stands accused of attempts to develop a huge military capability and a nuclear weapons programme as well as their means of delivery. There are reports that Iran is on the verge of completing its missile testing plans that would put Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey and parts of southern Russia within their reach.

Blame for the vicious cycle of arms build-up in this part of the world largely rests on the shoulders of the arms producers which have developed a vested interest in maintaining tensions that ultimately bankroll their industrial-military complexes.

The U.S., Russia, Great Britain, France, and China to the East, are among the biggest beneficiaries from this international "trade" in military hardware. According to the IISS report, the U.S. alone sells \$15 billion worth of arms to the world. Russia is a distant second with a price tag on its "trade" in tools of destruction amounting to \$3 billion.

For as long as there is no peace and security among the states of the international community there will always be a market for arms. The inevitable conclusion is, therefore, that the only effective way to stop this tremendous waste is to work harder towards resolving regional and international conflicts. Here in the Middle East, the countries of the region still spend huge amounts on military schemes in spite of the onset of the peace process in 1991. What we are afraid of is that the latest setback in the search for a Syrian-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli formula would accelerate rather than diminish the arms race. Israel, under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, should pause and think about what is happening. Not only is a sizeable portion of its budget continuing to go down the drain, as a result of the new-old tensions, the climate for investment and regional projects too being threatened, to the chagrin of all those who wished and worked for peace and tranquillity in this region.

Are trouble, death, destruction and wars a viable alternative to peace, security, development and progress in today's world? If the answer is not in the affirmative, all countries, big and small, should strive to halt the race and trade in arms as a first step towards building mutual confidence and defusing crisis. The Middle East, in particular, deserves to be helped and supported in this regard. It is not only the biggest marketplace for weapons; it also remains a flashpoint and a breeding ground from which other crisis and conflicts can ignite and proliferate.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

DESPITE AMERICA'S unfavourable policies towards the Arabs and its bias towards Israel, we have to admit that the United States administration is not hostile to Jordan, said Fahed Faneh, a writer for Al Ra'i daily. Monday. Indeed, we can notice that Washington's general policies towards the Kingdom are positive and it is clear that it wants to maintain a strong and stable Jordan which represents a moderate model of a state that can by no means threaten America's interest, said the writer. But, he said, one can only wonder why America acts negatively towards helping Jordan overcome standard of living. While the U.S. continues to provide Israel with a \$3.2 billion in financial and economic aid annually, and pumps \$2.1 billion in similar aid to Egypt, it allocates a mere \$10 million as an annual aid to the Kingdom, continued the writer. The writer wondered whether it was the fault of the Jordanian government's negotiations with Israel over the peace treaty that was signed in 1994, or the United States' itself despite its realisation that Jordan deserves all forms of aid and support to maintain its moderate policies in this region.

The View from Fourth Circle

Gas masks and lost passion in Jordanian-Israeli relations

By Rami G. Khouri

THE SIGNIFICANCE of the rise in tension between Jordan and Israel, due to the Israeli government's policies on tunnels and other sensitive issues reveals important aspects of domestic governance, politics and policy-making in Jordan. These should cause Israelis and others to wake up and see the world as it really is — if the historic promise of justice and peace is to be achieved.

On the domestic Jordanian front, Israel's harsh policies in Palestine have succeeded in achieving two things that have been elusive since the signing of the peace treaty in October 1994: a convergence of publicly stated attitudes to Israel by the Jordanian leadership and mainstream political groups, and a broad, strengthened Jordanian political consensus against normalisation of ties with Israel.

The numerous statements critical of Israel in recent weeks by King Hussein, Crown Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Kabarti are noteworthy both for their strong, almost apocalyptic political tone and for their powerful cultural dimension, i.e., that Jordan and its leadership, which have been embraced by Israel as a true friend and an example of how Arab-Israeli peace and bilateral relations should develop, should reproach, warn and even scold the Israeli leadership in public, is a sign of the magnitude of Jordanian anger and concern. Only your real friends speak honestly to you, in life as in politics and diplomacy.

Notice, in this respect, the huge difference in how Israel has reacted to criticisms by Jordan and Egypt in recent weeks. Egyptian criticism has been shrugged off as either almost meaningless or a function of Egypt's domestic or pan-Arab concerns, while Jordanian criticism has elicited a far more sober and reflective Israeli response. This is not because Jordan is stronger or more important than Egypt. The reason is that Jordan started its peace-making adventure with Israel from a sincere position of conviction, warmth and an active desire to promote not just non-belligerence but also cooperation, human reconciliation and activation of genuine shared interests, security and prosperity. Even after the election of Mr Netanyahu, six months ago, the Jordanian leadership was urging the Arabs to give the new Israeli government time to prove its peace-seeking credentials. This month, the Jordanian leadership has been reminding Netanyahu about gas masks.

Such criticism of Israel also stems from the fact that the Jordanian government's position has changed somewhat, so that it more accurately reflects the mainstream sentiment in the Jordanian political arena. This is what should really concern the Israeli people and Jews around the world who regard Israel as the state of the Jewish people: the Jordanian government in 1996 seems virtually to have abandoned its policy of active, dynamic normalisation of relations with Israel.

Instead, it seems to me, the Jordanian government has quietly fallen back on a more passive position that sees the 1994 peace treaty as an opportunity for normalcy and cooperation that the people of Jordan and Israel may choose to develop to its full potential, to allow to stagnate at current levels of lukewarm bilateral contacts, or to reject and to freeze until the political environment for genuine peace improves. The passion that once defined the

government's peace-making with Israel has dimmed measurably. This is clear in several different forms: the government no longer actively opposes or significantly obstructs the anti-normalisation camp, as it did in 1994-95; public meetings with Israeli officials and Jewish delegations from around the world are few, far between, and not as loudly trumpeted as they used to be; and, despite my frequent naps, I have not heard any government minister, including our prime ministers, speak passionately or eloquently about peace with Israel for about, oh, two years now.

The slow shift in the Jordanian position vis-à-vis Israel has been long in the making, and has only been more clearly expressed, rather than created, due to the Jerusalem tunnel episode. The advent of the Netanyahu government and its bizarre coalition of snake oil salesmen, weirdos and generals seemed to stop and then to threaten the gains that the Palestinians had achieved by implementing the Oslo accords with the Rabin government. As Palestinian hope dissipated and Jordanian and Arab disappointment increased, the currency of the anti-normalisation groups appreciated in value.

We saw this expressed here in a most dramatic way earlier this week with the publication of the statement by 38 Jordanian political parties, professional associations and non-governmental organisations. It was very critical of the Israeli government, called for Arab states to reconsider their relations with Israel, called on the Arab people "to resist all forms of normalisation with the Zionist enemy", and condemned the stand of the United States as biased towards Israel and against Arab rights. Wow!

It is quite an achievement to get a common position on anything by folks as different as those who signed this statement, representing as they do the far right and left and almost everything in between. It is even more significant when we appreciate the tone and direction of the statement that they signed. Its strong pan-Arab orientation is intriguing and important, in my view. It represents the continued appreciation and redefinition of pan-Arab concepts that are likely to keep resurfacing in modern, realistic forms, as individual Arab states, Islamists, tribalists, narrow statisticians, ethnic warlords, fried chicken franchisers, and others around here continue to appreciate the weaknesses of their unrealistically narrow approaches to economic well-being, national security and political stability.

The statement's most telling aspect, in my view, was the powerful resurgence of visceral anti-Zionism as a reflexive, almost biological Jordanian and Arab response to the offensive actions, attitudes and words of the Israeli government. The statement noted that "...it has become clear [since Madrid] that Israel has not abandoned its Zionist project and its doctrine. Israel's goals are the usurpation of more land, more repression, more arrogance, more discrimination, and more eviction of Arabs from their homeland, in addition to expansion of Jewish settlements and desecration of shrines."

If Israel does not recognise our Arab dignity and rights, then we will not recognise or live with Zionism or an Israeli state, was the full meaning behind the words of the

statement, in my view. Coming from the far right or left of the political spectrum, such views are neither surprising nor newsworthy: it is not big deal, thus, that the statement was signed by the Islamic Action Front party, the Jordanian Communist Party, the doctors' and engineers' associations, and other groups whose positions at either end of the political spectrum are both well established and also largely impotent in terms of influencing government policy.

But, when such views come, as they do, from hardcore establishment groups such as the Ahd Party (headed by a powerful minister in the government!), the Yagatha Party, the Progress and Justice Party, the Unionist Arab Democratic Party, the Jordanian Businessmen's Association, the Amman Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Association of Banks, the associations of auditors, agricultural engineers, veterinarians, and nurses, the women's federation and union, the Arab Orthodox Society, and other such mainstream groups, then we should tell Israelis that they should see this as an accurate reflection of the attitudes of the Jordanian people. They and we should recognise the important change that has started to occur in Jordan since the advent of the Netanyahu government and its bizarre coalition of snake oil salesmen, weirdos and generals: a) the passive scepticism that most Jordanians felt towards peace with Israel has slipped a notch towards mildly active opposition, expressed as support for the anti-normalisation effort (the only practical means of expression available in real political terms); b) the government's dynamic attempt to forge a warm peace between Jordanians and Israelis has slipped a notch towards a more passive attitude that sees its role more as a facilitator of opportunities than as a manufacturer of passion and a promoter of political embrace; c) the Jordanian leadership's willingness to stick its head out and to stay ahead of its people and the other Arab states in terms of fostering patience and understanding of the Israeli government has slipped a notch, towards a context in which the Jordanian leadership now seems more to reflect and articulate Arab anger with Israel than to dissipate or alleviate it.

The people, civil society institutions, government and leadership of Jordan have all criticised Israel with a combination of frankness and unanimity that are striking. These signals of concern and anger coming out of Jordan are just that — signals, not irrevocably rigid positions, an abandonment of the peace accord, or declarations of war. To speak of gas masks is not to prepare or to wish to wear them. It is to remind ourselves of the moral and political vulgarity that they represent, that we wish to avoid, but that we may be moving towards if present Israeli policies and our regional direction of drift are not changed very soon. We did not change anything in May 1996. The Israelis did. They now must confront the consequences of their actions, explain to us what they understand by "peace with security", and clarify to us if we should rekindle our passion for a warm and just peace or prepare for another round of Arab-Israeli war.

Jordan-Israel relations in state of 'deterioration'

By David Makovsky

ISRAELI-JORDANIAN relations are in a state of "deterioration" and cannot be mended until Israel immediately implements the Oslo accords and avoids unilateral actions in Jerusalem which Amman believes affect Jordanian custodianship over Muslim shrines there, Jordanian Ambassador Omar Rifai has said.

Mr. Rifai, who until now has studiously avoided criticising the Netanyahu government, spoke after a series of attacks in recent days by King Hussein concerning the government's "arrogance" when it came to the peace process. King Hussein also wondered whether Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is leading the region to war.

It remains unclear whether Mr. Netanyahu, who in the past has repeatedly expressed pride in his relationship with the monarch, will meet with King Hussein in the coming days to attempt to address the problems, or whether the premier will dispatch an envoy.

In an interview with The Jerusalem Post, Mr. Rifai said: "We have noted a serious deterioration in our bilateral relationship with Israel, which is at least partly due to a deterioration in the whole Arab-Israeli relationship. There has to be an immediate implementation of the Oslo agreement and there has to be a total respect of agreements signed between Israel and any Arab party."

When asked how the rift can be healed, Mr. Rifai responded: "He (Netanyahu) cannot mend the fences with Jordan, Egypt, the Gulf, the Palestinians and thus the entire Arab World until he implements the Oslo agreements."

Noting that Israel and Jordan should be celebrating the second anniversary of their peace treaty later this month, Mr. Rifai declared: "As we approach the second anniversary, the Israel-Jordanian relationship is not where it should be and not where it was since (the treaty) was signed."

Mr. Rifai made clear that Israel cannot isolate ties

with Jordan from an overall deterioration in its ties with all the Arabs.

"The whole Arab-Israeli relationship is in crisis because we have gone off track on the peace process," he said. "We are not where we should be in terms of achieving the goal we all aspire to, which is a comprehensive regional peace with security."

"We have gotten off-track because there seems to be an intransigence in the negotiating process at all levels, from Hebron to the closing off of the areas, settlements, unilateral actions in Jerusalem, and the list can go on."

"The atmosphere on the peace front as a whole has affected the Israeli-Jordanian relationship. While each track was separate in its own right, there is an interdependence between tracks."

"Without comprehensive peace, peace cannot be permanent. It is like standing on just a few legs of a chair. A chair needs all its legs to stand on," Mr. Rifai said.

Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said the

Jordanians "now tie the Palestinian issue with Jordan — and that is bad (because) the Palestinian issue is right now very questionable."

Mr. Rifai, however, made clear that the problem is not just the Palestinian issue and the regional climate per se, but also what Jordan perceives to be the premier's insensitivity in not informing King Hussein in advance about the opening of the Hasmonian Tunnel exit, especially since the premier had dispatched a top adviser, Dore Gold, to brief the King.

While Mr. Netanyahu has reiterated that the tunnel is 250 metres away from any Muslim holy places, Mr. Rifai said Jordan sees such "unilateral" action as undermining the provision of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, which makes clear that Amman has a special role in administering the holy places.

"By not notifying us about the tunnel and acting unilaterally in Arab East Jerusalem, we see this is not in accordance with the peace treaty," Mr. Rifai

said. More reported details of King Hussein's attack on Mr. Netanyahu at last week's private White House luncheon hosted by President Bill Clinton emerged.

According to New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, King Hussein said Mr. Netanyahu had expended goodwill and had an "arrogance of power." King Hussein reportedly said the lack of success of the Washington summit was a "success for

extremists and war-mongers."

King Hussein reportedly concluded: "Prime Minister Netanyahu, I am concerned for you. You are the leader of Israel. Can you seize the moment? Because if you can't, the real impact will be on all of us in this room."

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister David Levy cancelled Foreign Ministry consultations on Jordan, fearing that leaks could damage the sensitive ties.

LETTERS

Win, lose and draw

To the Editor:

WE ARE very thankful for the excellent job the Jordan Times is doing for the English reading community. A special thanks is relayed for reporting on American sports. My husband and I look forward to reading in the Jordan Times what our teams back home are doing in both American baseball and football.

However, we were very disappointed a while ago. Jordan Times only reported on one of the two baseball championship series now taking place in the U.S. These two series (best of seven for each) will decide the two leagues' champions which will go on to the World Series. We are eager to read the results of all playoff games currently going on in the U.S. and were especially disappointed when our team was not reported on.

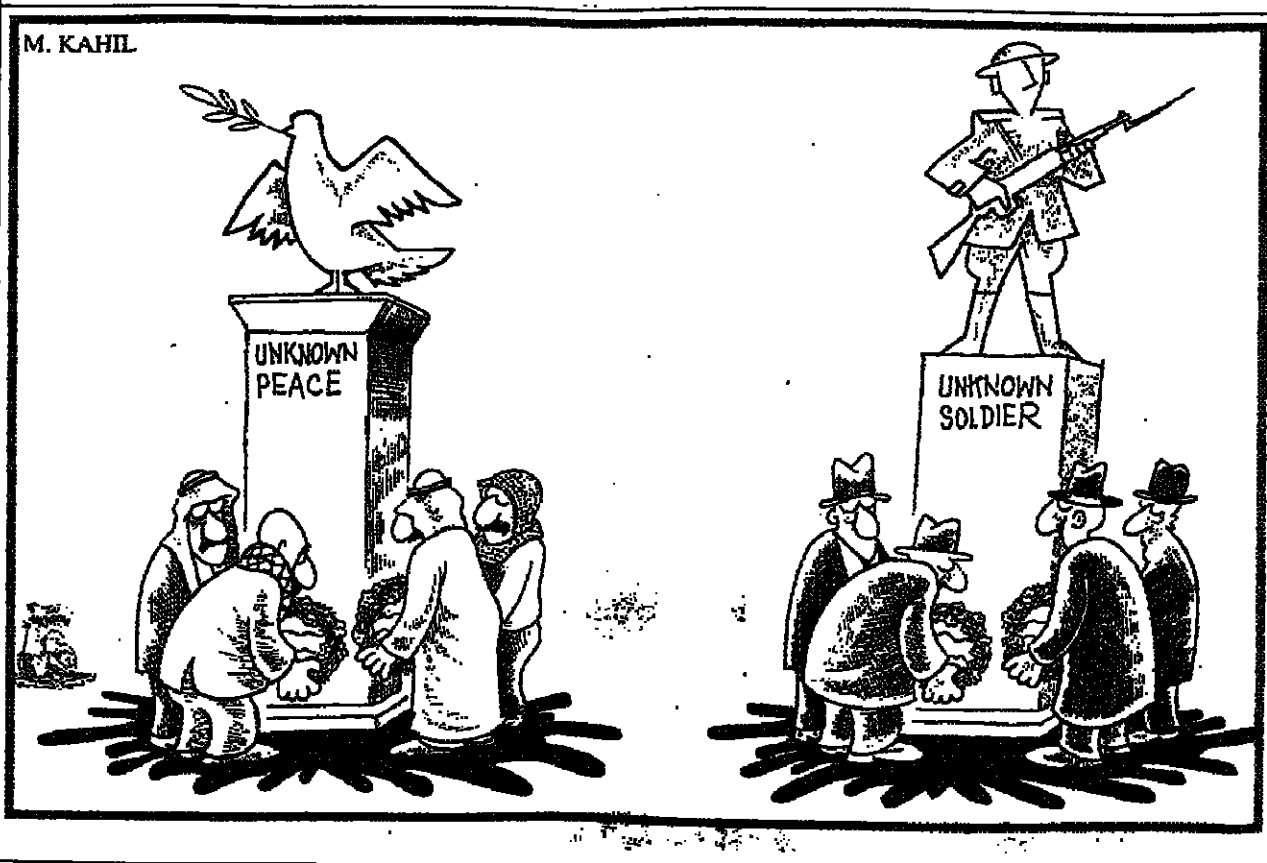
We would very much appreciate reading about the American League championship series (Baltimore Orioles vs. Cleveland Indians) as well as the National League championship series (Atlanta Braves vs. St. Louis Cardinals) which was in the Jordan Times on Oct. 11.

Looking forward to reading the results of our baseball teams' playoff games and continued coverage through the World Series.

Marie C. Bayyat,
Amman.

Editor's note: Due to time zone and play time differences, some news items reach us after press time. The sports-page editor, however, is trying to keep our readers informed even if it means, at times, that news is published some time after the event took place. We regret this inconvenience when it happens, but it is inevitable.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.



Central Bank invites exporters to benefit from \$40m World Bank financing

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), the designated administrator of a \$40 million World Bank loan to help the Kingdom's export sector, is inviting businessmen to take advantage of the credit facility through local commercial banks and finance houses.

The move, designed to help set up new export ventures, is the latest in the government's programme to achieve export-oriented economic growth.

The programme enjoys the full support of the World Bank, which is closely involved in reforms in various sectors of the economy aimed at increasing cost-effective services and productivity.

The loan scheme is separate from credit facilities that the Central Bank offers through the local banks to finance exports. The government and the World Bank signed the relevant loan agreement in April this year.

In advertisements appearing in local Arabic-language papers on Monday, the CBJ named 13 commercial banks and financial institutions through which exporters could avail themselves of financing for export-oriented companies.

The financing is available as start-up funds on medium-level soft terms in dinars or in dollars for export-oriented ventures under certain conditions.

The ceiling for the credit is \$2 million or its equivalent in dinars for each project.

Loans are repayable in six-monthly instalments over seven years with three years of grace.

Applications, supported by documents such as feasibility studies and project reports, should be submitted to any of the commercial banks or financial institutions.

The concerned bank or financial institution will submit the requests to the CBJ, which, by definition, cannot lend to individuals and can only deal with

commercial banks and financial institutions.

The \$40 million loan is part of a World Bank credit worth about \$140 million that Jordan is expected to receive in this fiscal year. The bank has also given loans to support the Kingdom's reform programmes in the water and energy sectors as well as projects in the tourism sector.

The banks/financial institutions involved in the loan scheme for export-oriented companies are: the Jordan National Bank, The Arab Bank, the Jordan Kuwait Bank, the Amman Cairo Bank, the Jordan Gulf Bank, the Business Bank, the Arab Banking Corporation, the Export Finance Bank, the Housing Bank, the Jordan Arab Investment Bank, the Jordan Bank for Investment and Finance, the Union Bank for Saving and Investment and the Middle East Investment Bank.

Enron says Israel modified gas deal

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The U.S. Enron Corporation said Monday Israel had informed it that the Jewish state had dropped an intention to buy gas exclusively from Enron but that the company was going ahead with its plans to develop a Qatari field which is expected to be the main source for the gas involved in the deal.

Jordanian officials said that Israel dropping the exclusive arrangement does not have any bearing on technical consultations under way on a terminal to be built at Aqaba to store and process Qatari gas.

"We are of course seeking full details of the change in the arrangement but we don't think it will affect the ongoing preparations to build the gas terminal at Aqaba," said an official source.

The announcement of the change was made in Abu Dhabi by Enron Development Corporation General Manager Carey Sloan.

According to Mr. Sloan, Israel told the company that it was cancelling an exclusivity clause in a letter of intent the Jewish state and Enron signed dur-

ing the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit in Amman late last year. The cancellation, Mr. Sloan said, meant that Israel was free to consider supplies from other sources.

The project involves two separate agreements. Under one accord signed with Qatar, Enron will develop a gasfield in the Gulf emirate and market the output. The second agreement calls for Israeli purchase of gas from Enron worth \$2 billion every year.

Jordan will host a \$300 million terminal at Aqaba to store and process the liquefied gas shipped from Qatar and pump it to Israel. The terminal will be a joint venture, with Enron providing 50 per cent of the project cost and Jordan and Israel 25 per cent each.

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said Sunday that as far as Jordan was concerned, "the project is still on and our technical committees are continuing discussions on the proposed terminal at Aqaba."

Enron's Sloan revealed Monday that Israel last month terminated the letter of intent which it signed in October 1995 in Amman to

buy gas exclusively from Qatar, but that it sent the Houston-based firm another letter saying it might still buy Qatari gas.

"They said they are still interested in talking to us about gas supplies from Qatar," he said. "Enron still has exclusivity marketing rights for Israel and Jordan from the (state-run) Qatar General Petroleum Corporation (QGPC)," he was quoted as saying by Agence France Presse.

Mr. Sloan did not say why Israel had changed its mind.

"They are still very interested in Qatari gas," Mr. Sloan earlier told delegates at a conference in Abu Dhabi. "We have a heads of agreement on the table and we are continuing to proceed with that."

Mr. Sloan did not elaborate on the second letter that he said Enron received from Israel.

Under the Enron-Israel agreement signed in Amman, the company had 180 days to finalise agreement with Qatar for the supply of at least two million tonnes a year of natural gas. The deal would be worth around \$2 billion a year.

The agreement gave Enron exclusivity in negotiations with Qatar during this 180-day period.

According to an Israeli spokesman, Israel decided not to renew the agreement with Enron since no deal was reached with Qatar during the 180-day period. However, he stressed, this did not mean that Enron could not continue to negotiate with Israel towards

reaching a deal.

Mr. Sloan said Enron was planning to develop LNG from Qatar's oilfield for export to Aqaba in the first quarter of the year 2001.

While the delay in finalising a deal was officially cited as the reason behind the Israeli change of mind, observers said Israel appeared to be sending a political message to Qatar.

Qatar and Oman have forged ahead of other Gulf states in establishing economic ties with Israel but have stopped short of full diplomatic relations pending the resolution of all Arab-Israeli conflicts.

But Qatar said last month that it was freezing all moves to normalise relations with Israel, including the opening of a trade office in Israel. The Qatari decision was linked to the stagnation in the peace process after the May election victory of right-wing leader Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister of Israel.

Industry sources at the gas summit convening in Abu Dhabi told AFP that Qatari officials were annoyed at Israel's decision to terminate the deal with Enron.

Mr. Sloan said he expected Enron and QGPC to sign a deal to create a \$2.5 billion LNG plant before the end of the year. "I expect a 60/40 or a 65/35 split participation with QGPC having the majority," he said.

India, Israel and Jordan are the potential customers for this five-million-tonne a year LNG plant, the third one in Qatar, he added.

Israeli cabinet sidesteps decision on savings tax

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's cabinet sidestepped Monday a decision on a politically sensitive tax on short-term savings, adopting only part of the finance ministry's proposed capital market reform package, officials said.

The short-term savings tax was the key component of the reform, which aims to encourage long-term savings and boost the ailing stock and bond markets.

"Senior officials on the level of directors-general from the Bank of Israel, the

finance ministry, and the prime minister's office will continue to debate the savings tax issue for two weeks," a finance ministry spokeswoman told Reuters.

"Until then, no tax will be implemented," he said.

Treasury sources said Finance Minister Dan Meridor was opposed to the compromise decision, reached after a marathon meeting of the cabinet that lasted into the pre-dawn hours on Monday.

Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu, who took office last June with a promise not to raise taxes, led the cabinet majority in favour of the compromise.

The spokeswoman said the two-week delay would also apply to a range of other measures tied to savings, among them issues related to pension funds.

The tax on savings of less than 10 years' duration has been openly opposed by Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel and the powerful director-general of the prime minister's office,

Avigdor Liberman.

Members of the committee that recommended the measures said Sunday that without implementing the entire package, Israel's slumping stock and bond market had little prospect of recovery.

The committee was led by finance ministry director-general David Brodett, who said he saw no alterna-

tive to the proposed measures.

"Failure to approve the Brodett committee's measures will bring very negative results to the bourse, because it will appear that the government has no intention of dealing with the capital market's problem, the long-term problem, in a serious manner," committee member Amir Barnea told Israel Radio.

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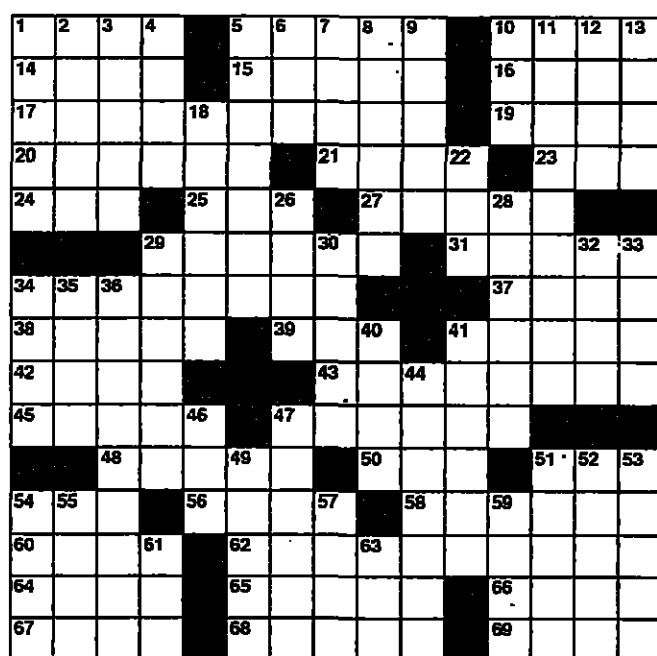
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Jordan Times

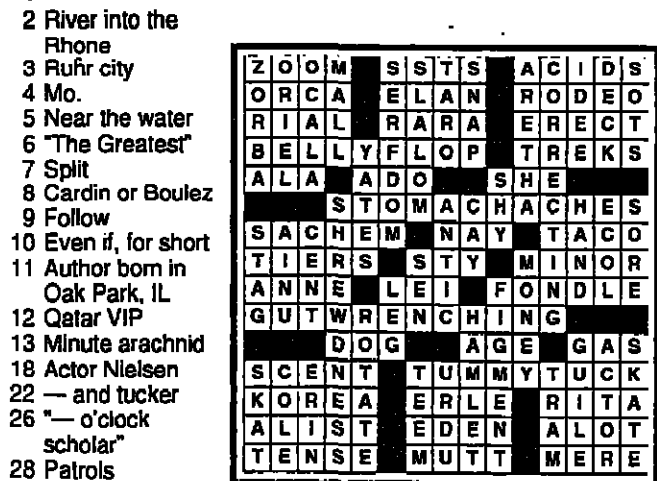
Tel: 684311-699634

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- 1 Palissier items
 - 5 — diem
 - 10 "Let — eat cake"
 - 14 Being: Lat.
 - 15 Oily liquid
 - 16 Sphere starter
 - 17 Chicago suburb
 - 19 Skip
 - 20 Rugged ridges
 - 21 Thrash
 - 23 Cholera
 - 24 Deighton or Carou
 - 25 Dep.
 - 27 Rule
 - 29 Missouri tributary
 - 31 Army awakener
 - 34 One who maligns
 - 37 Not home
 - 38 Legal right
 - 39 Catch
 - 41 Imitate
 - 42 Demosthenes
 - 43 Kind of school: abbr.
 - 43 Thorough
 - 45 Depression in a bone
 - 47 "Our better —" (Wordsworth)
 - 48 Remove
 - 50 Salt
 - 51 Angel's delight: abbr.
 - 54 Harding or Rutherford
 - 56 Ent' (intermission)
 - 58 Santa's reindeer
 - 60 Clamping device
 - 62 City on the Mississippi
 - 64 Adam's grandson
 - 65 Pale
 - 66 Comedian
 - 67 Actor
 - 68 Conductor Solit
 - 69 Equal
- DOWN
- 1 Bicycle part



by Wilson McBeath



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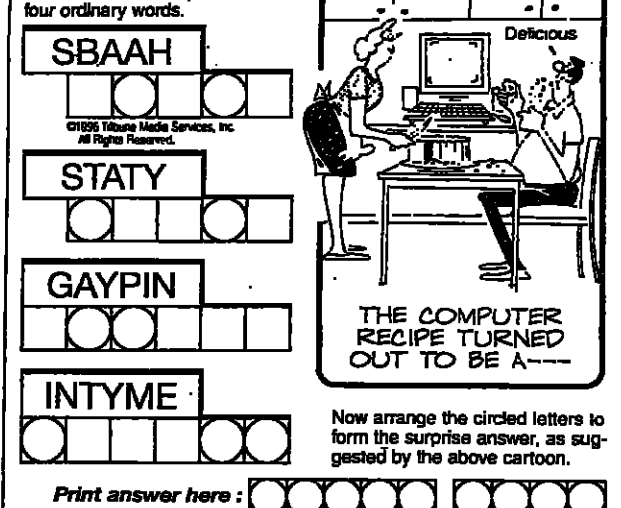
- 2 River in the Rhone
- 3 Ruhr city
- 4 Mo.
- 5 Near the water
- 6 "The Greatest"
- 7 Split
- 8 Cardin or Boulez
- 9 Follow
- 10 Even if, for short
- 11 Author born in Oak Park, IL
- 12 Qatar VIP
- 13 Minute arachnid
- 18 Actor Nielsen
- 22 — and tucker
- 26 "— o'clock scholar"
- 28 Patrols
- 29 Betsy or Arnold
- 30 Part of NAFTA
- 32 Recent
- 33 Gave the once-over
- 34 Crown worn by Osiris
- 35 Farm structure
- 36 Noted governor of IL
- 40 Hit hard
- 41 Lincoln Center
- 44 Dodging
- 46 Driver's org.
- 47 Bristly
- 49 Scrawny animal
- 51 Investment unit
- 52 Parisian's income
- 53 Command
- 54 State firmly
- 55 Supreme Court justices
- 57 Resound
- 59 Cluff
- 61 Nautical dir.
- 63 Prefix for plunk or plo

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: LUNGE PAYEE CALICO UNFOLD
Answer: A long night at the pub can leave you — ALE-ING

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY OCTOBER 15 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have every chance to bring your abilities and talents to the attention of bigwigs who can help. Later this evening will be good for discussing your career activities with knowledgeable persons for their advice.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Be gentle with your mate tonight and can have romantic time together. Avoid expensive entertainment and come to a family agreement with your loved ones for recreational activities which will be fun.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Find the best today to get your ideas across to others and thereby you can be successful. Then see to it that all is harmonious at home later tonight so that everyone living under your roof are content.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Raise your level of consciousness today and you can increase your abundance as a result of your career activities. Be careful driving on the highway later this evening so that you can enjoy yourself with close friends.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You became inspired in days past and it continues into today, so go ahead with that fine activity and you will gain success and prestige as a result of your efforts. Later this evening have fun with close friends.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can visualise how to make your dreams come true today, however, later tonight don't be forceful to gain your own way or you can find yourself disturbing close friends and fellow associates with your actions.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Pursue the personal wishes which motivate you today and gain them. Don't permit anxiety to limit your progress later this evening, then you can make this time more productive through your own efforts and desires.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Discuss with a bigwig today what your aims regarding the world really are and gain assistance for them. Later this evening will be good for you to seek out those in authority and discuss creative ideas you have developed.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You are newly inspired today and you can accomplish much with your career activities. Take no risks with your reputation by involvement in projects which you have any suspicion that they could not be proper.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get your bills together to determine if any are overdue and those which are current. Do something which will greatly please your mate and he or she will be very grateful. Rid yourself of boredom in the days ahead.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You may get a favour from an influential friend today, so be gracious about it and don't act selfish. Don't allow irritation to bother you later this evening and then you can meet with close friends for fun activities.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You may be drawn into unpleasant surroundings today, however, leave quickly and be safe. Make sure you drive carefully which on the highway and thereby you can have fun at recreational activities with close friends.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline.

Aqaba tourist businesses charge poor government planning, marketing for slump

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AQABA — Businessmen and investors in Aqaba fault lack of "serious long-term planning" and marketing strategies for the drop in tourism profits registered in the first nine months of this year.

The natural beauty of Jor-

dan's only port city is not enough to keep the tourism industry going, hoteliers and tourism agents say, complaining that the peace process is not bearing the promised fruits, and competition with Israel is putting Jordanian products at a disadvantage in the tourism market.

"As a matter of fact, the

peace process did not bring us business, but it rather took it away from us," hotelier and tourism entrepreneur William Sawalha told the Jordan Times.

Though, according to media reports, tourism is declining throughout the Middle East because of regional instability and fresh conflicts, Aqaba business-

men feel that lower transportation costs and higher flexibility in formulating more appealing and convenient offers mitigate the negative impact of political crisis on the Israeli market.

"Transportation costs are lower (in Israel), and agents have the power to adjust their prices to the demand," Mr. Sawalha said, noting

that 45 charters fly up to 6,000 tourists to Eilat every week.

While occupancy rates are reportedly 60 per cent in Eilat, hoteliers in Aqaba registered a sharp drop in business in the first nine months of 1996.

"Last year in this same period our occupancy rate was 77 per cent, while cur-

rently it is 50 per cent only," general manager of the Aqaba Holiday International Hotel Abdel Rahim Zuro told the Jordan Times.

Complaining of a "general weakness in planning and marketing from the government's side," Dr. Zuro added that "Jordan needs to be promoted."

He called for further coor-

dination between the public and private sector to achieve higher-standard planning, adding that "all the private associations and public institutions operating in the tourism sector should work as a team."

Hoteliers also point to the need for creating tourism attractions in Aqaba and developing human resources

for the tourism industry.

"We have to develop water sports facilities and other attractions in order to convince the tourists to stay," Mr. Sawalha said, saying that, in Aqaba, there is not even one single qualified swimming instructor.

Together with the Royal Diving Centre, some hotels in Aqaba provide diving courses held by qualified instructors, but there is not a sailing or wind surfing school, for example.

Officials agree with private sector businessmen on the poor performances of tourism in Aqaba, though the Ministry of Tourism has not made available exact figures of the number of tourists who visited the Red Sea port city this year.

"We know that the figures related to the number of tourists and the volume of profits are down, especially when compared with last year's tourism revenues," President of the Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) Fawez Khasawneh admitted.

According to Mr. Khasawneh, Aqaba is suffering mainly from the bad publicity in the Western arena as a result of political events such as the Israeli attacks against south Lebanon, the Karak disorders, the recent US-Iraqi crisis and the bloody clashes between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank.

"European and American tourists look at the region as a whole, not just Aqaba," he said, implying that a crisis in one area is likely to affect tourism to another.

According to Ministry of Tourism official statistics, the growth in the number of European and U.S. tourists to Jordan registered a sudden plunge this year. The statistics show that the first nine months of 1995 registered a growth rate of 21 per cent (in European tourists) and 15.6 (Americans) over 1994 figures for the same period. In significant contrast, the first nine months of 1996 the ratios indicated a recession in the growth rate with 9.41 and 0.64 for the two groups respectively.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

| Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 14/10/96 20:23 | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY | CAD | AUD | NZD | TRY |
| US Dollar | 1.5282 | 0.6325 | 0.7255 | 1.1156 | 1.3520 | 1.5215 | 1.7150 | 1.5157 | |
| DE Mark | 0.6544 | | 0.4136 | 0.8199 | 73.02 | 0.8843 | 0.9959 | 1.1225 | 3.3857 |
| GB Sterling | 1.5810 | 1.5810 | | 1.9791 | 176.22 | 2.1375 | 2.4052 | 2.7118 | 8.1800 |
| CH Franc | 0.7984 | 1.2191 | 0.5044 | | 89.05 | 1.0794 | 1.2132 | 1.3685 | 4.1277 |
| JP Yen | 0.0090 | 1.3692 | 0.5665 | 1.1218 | | 1.2114 | 1.364 | 1.5366 | 4.6368 |
| CA Dollar | 0.7396 | 1.1299 | 0.4875 | 0.9261 | 1.21 | | 1.1225 | 1.2680 | 3.8256 |
| IT Lira | 0.0007 | 1.0040 | 0.4154 | 0.0823 | 1365.93 | 0.8882 | | 11.27 | 3.3993 |
| NL Guilder | 0.5851 | 89.06 | 0.3685 | 73.04 | 85.00 | 0.7881 | 886.98 | | 3.0161 |
| FR Franc | 0.1932 | 0.2953 | 0.1222 | 24.2024 | 21.53 | 0.2813 | 32.14 | 33.1400 | |

| Energy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Oil | Last | Previous | | | | | | | |
| Brent | 25.55 | 24.65 | | | | | | | |
| W. Texas | 25.40 | 24.60 | | | | | | | |
| Bony | 25.35 | 24.65 | | | | | | | |
| Dubai | 22.00 | 21.49 | | | | | | | |
| UL Gas | 227.00 | 213.00 | | | | | | | |

| Mid-East Currencies | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--|--|--|--|
| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY | | | | |
| SA Riyal | 0.2688 | 0.4077 | 0.18863 | 0.3307 | 29.7592 | | | | |
| AE Dirham | 0.2723 | 0.4163 | 0.1722 | 0.34104 | 30.3896 | | | | |
| KW Dinar | 3.3367 | 5.10204 | 2.11015 | 4.17885 | 372.439 | | | | |
| BH Dinar | 0.3770 | 0.40515 | 1.67785 | 3.2226 | 296.121 | | | | |
| CY Pound | 2.144 | 3.2745 | 1.3549 | 2.6827 | 239.851 | | | | |

| Currency Deposit Rates (Bid) | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------|----------|----------|--------|------|--|--|--|--|
| Period | 1 Month | 3 Months | 6 Months | 1 Year | | | | | |
| USD | 5.22 | 5.40 | 5.59 | 5.82 | 5.72 | | | | |
| GBP | 5.81 | 5.90 | 5.93 | 5.93 | 6.19 | | | | |
| JPY | 0.40 | 0.36 | 0.40 | 0.37 | 0.62 | | | | |
| DEM | 2.93 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.02 | 3.05 | | | | |
| FRF | 3.39 | 3.46 | 3.55 | 3.59 | 3.62 | | | | |
| CHF | 1.39 | 1.43 | 1.45 | 1.49 | 1.42 | | | | |
| ITL | 8.18 | 7.98 | 7.76 | 7.53 | 7.48 | | | | |

| Main Equity Indices | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|--------|----------|---------|---------|---------|--|--|
| Bourse | Index | Value | Change | % Change | High | Low | Pre Cl. | | |
| New York | DOW JONES | 6012.61 | 43.23 | 0.72 | 6016.71 | 5970.12 | 5969.38 | | |
| New York | S&P 500 | 704.38 | 3.72 | 0.53 | 705.13 | 700.66 | 700.66 | | |
| London | FT-SE 100 | 4038.7 | 10.6 | 0.26 | 4040 | 4017 | 4028.1 | | |
| Frankfurt | DAX | 2693.88 | 7.85 | 0.29 | 2695.8 | 2689.56 | 2686.03 | | |

| Energy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Commodity | Last | Delivery | | | | | | | |
| Coffee (c/lb) | 123.08 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Cocoa (S/ton) | 1459 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Sugar (S/ton) | 330 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Wheat (S/ton) | 159 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Soya (c/lb) | 22.99 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Tee (kg/kg) | 115 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Barley (S/bsh) | 2.57 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Rice (S/ton) | 465 | Spot | | | | | | | |

Economic slowdown widens problem of bouncing cheques

Economic slowdown widens problem of bouncing cheques

**** OFFICIAL DATA** issued by the Central Bank shows that a total of 248,600 cheques amounting to over JD261 million have bounced during the first seven months of this year. The number of cheques and the amount were 14.4 per cent and 9.7 per cent higher than the figures registered during the same period of 1995. During the month of July alone, the number of cheques that bounced was 37,000 for a total amount of JD44.5 million, an increase of 20.2 per cent over the amount recorded in the same month of last year.

Bankers and economists linked the expanding phenomenon of returned cheques to the slow economic growth and pointed out the difficult economic situation in general especially in marketing locally-manufactured as well as imported goods and products. Facing liquidity shortage, businessmen were forced into writing cheques that were either post-dated or not having sufficient funds in the accounts (Al Aswaq).

Employment mechanism under review, Nasser says

**** ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT** Minister Kamal Nasser assured job seekers registered at the Civil Service Bureau but now working elsewhere that they will not be disqualified from civil service job openings but that priority will be given to those registered and not employed. Noting that many who have applied for government jobs at the bureau have been employed by the private sector or elsewhere, Dr. Nasser said that a new policy will be adopted towards those persons from next year because they are preventing others (the jobless) from the chance of being employed.

Dr. Nasser revealed that the bases for employment and the mechanism for registering applications were under review in order to arrive at a formula that would combine qualifications, productivity and justice. In this context, he noted that starting next year there will be no employment except for humanitarian cases only (Al Aswaq).

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Yankees reach World Series

BALTIMORE (R) — The New York Yankees exploded for six runs on three homers in the third inning Sunday to beat the Baltimore Orioles 6-4 and reach their first World Series since 1981. The home runs — by Jim Leyritz, Cecil Fielder and Darryl Strawberry — were more than enough for Andy Pettitte, who pitched eight strong innings as the Yankees closed out the American League Championship Series (ALCS), four games to one.

Including this game, the Yankees were an amazing 9-0 at Baltimore's Camden Yards this year.

"I got three hits in the series and got a lot of mileage — eight RBIs," said Fielder, traded to the Yankees mid-season by the woeful Detroit Tigers. "I think I earned my money. Usually I'm home playing with the kids now. But this is better."

Pettitte, the leading candidate for the AL Cy Young award as the league's best pitcher with 21 games this season, allowed just three hits, including solo homers to Todd Zeile in the sixth and Eddie Murray in the eighth.

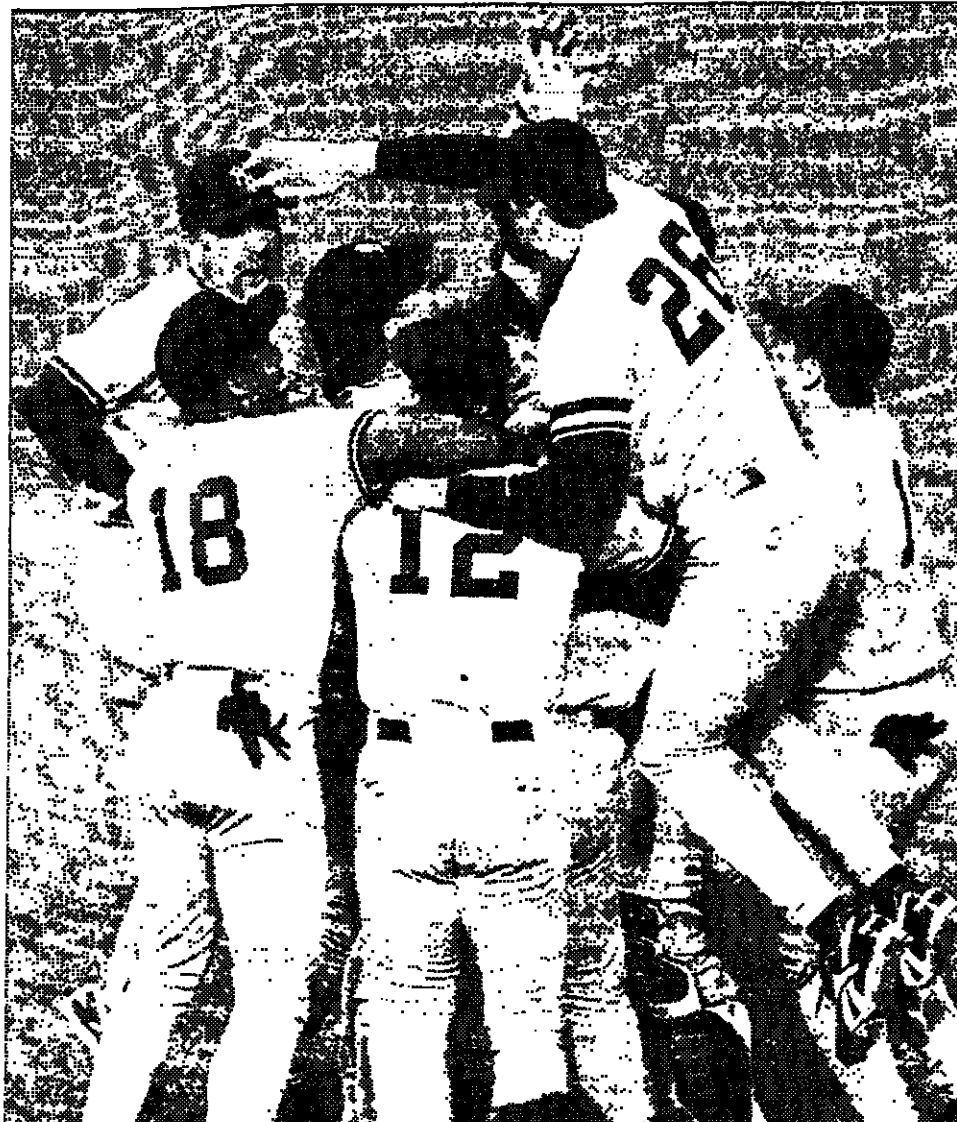
"I can't believe this," Pettitte said. "It's only my second year. I was throwing fastballs and trying to get ahead of the hitters."

The Orioles made it close in the ninth when John Wetteland allowed a leadoff walk to Zeile and Bobby Bonilla hit a two-run homer with two outs. But Cal Ripken grounded to short and the long throw from Derek Jeter beat a diving Ripken at first base for the final out.

Losing manager Davey Johnson said: "I'm proud of them. They fought back all year. They fought back today and we got close in the ninth."

Yankees' centerfielder Bernie Williams — 2 for 5 Sunday — was named the most valuable player in the ALCS. He hit safely in all nine post-season games and .474 in the five games against Baltimore with two home runs and six RBIs.

"Awesome," he said. "Joe Torre talked about nothing but the world series all year. The Yankees, baseball's most storied franchise, will appear in their record 34th World Series when they host either Atlanta or St. Louis in



Members of the New York Yankees jump on the pile as they celebrate their American League Championship Series win over the Baltimore Orioles in game five of the American League Championship Series in Baltimore's Camden Yards. The Yankees won the game 6-4 (Reuters photo)

game one of the 1996 series next Saturday night. The Yankees' last appearance was in 1981 when they lost to the Los Angeles Dodgers in six games.

The man who waited the longest for a trip to baseball's showcase was Yankees manager Joe Torre, who has participated in 4,272 games as a player and manager and will now be part of his first World Series.

It has been a difficult season for Torre, who endured the death of one brother and brother Frank desperately awaits a heart transplant. "If Frank's heart isn't better after this, nothing would make it better," Torre said. "The guys put their egos on the back burner and allowed me to juggle players who had been regulars and stars elsewhere."

"Our bullpen won it. When we got to the seventh inning with the lead, the game was over."

All three homers were allowed by Scott Erickson, who became the first pitcher in ALCS history to surrender three homers in an inning. But Erickson might have escaped serious damage if not for a key error by second baseman Roberto Alomar, who won his sixth straight gold glove as the league's best defensive player last week.

Leyritz homered to right on a 3-2 pitch to open the third and Jeter singled to centre with one out. Wade Boggs reached on an infield single before Bernie Williams hit a grounder that went through Alomar's legs, allowing Jeter to score. Boggs was thrown out at home on a fielder's choice grounder.

Fielder then unloaded a three-run homer to left. He was just 3-for-18 in the series but drove in eight runs. Strawberry followed with a

mammoth homer to centre field on a 2-2 pitch. It was his third homer in two games.

Erickson lasted five innings, allowing seven hits. The Orioles set a Major League record with 257 homers this season. But the Yankees won the long-ball battle this series. The Yankees hit the third-lowest number of homers in the AL this season (162) before going deep 10 times in the series.

Baltimore hit nine homers in the series. The Yankees won the series opener controversially, when Jeter was allowed a home run after a fan interfered with the ball. But New York left little doubt as to its superiority by winning the final three games of the series at Camden Yards. The Yankees won all nine games in Baltimore this season.

FIFA says Korea and Japan moving apart on World Cup

LONDON (R) — FIFA General Secretary Sepp Blatter has said the deep divisions between South Korea and Japan are hampering the build-up to the 2002 World Cup finals to be jointly staged by the two countries.

In an interview in November's world soccer magazine, Blatter said: "I must say that the countries are not only not coming closer, it's quite the opposite. They are moving further apart. This is not the marriage we want."

FIFA, world soccer's governing body, awarded the finals jointly to both countries in May. It was a decision fraught with problems bearing in mind the historic animosity between the two nations — and those problems are worrying FIFA now.

Blatter said in the interview: "There is no point in looking back over all the manoeuvring, even the politics of intimidation before the executive committee's meeting in May."

"What with holidays and other engagements it has been difficult enough to arrange even a date and venue for a meeting between the representatives of the two countries who may not be the best of friends."

"And this is even before we come to the substantive issues."

All sides are due to meet in Zurich on November 6 and Blatter says that before then FIFA intends to meet both Japanese and Korean officials to discuss how they plan to work together.

But he added: "It won't be easy. They cannot even agree on the shape of the tournament."

"Japan, for instance, wants perhaps 40 teams in the finals so they have more matches in their cities — but the Koreans want only (32 teams) because they have envisaged only main host cities hosting matches."

Among many other matters still to be decided is where the final will be played. One suggestion was for Japan and South Korea to play each other, with the winner deciding the venue.

Los Angeles, D.C. United advance to MLS final

KANSAS CITY (R) — The Los Angeles Galaxy and D.C. United qualified for the Major League Soccer championship game by winning their respective conference titles over the weekend.

United was the first to clinch by defeating the Tampa Bay Mutiny 2-1 on Saturday to win the best-of-three Eastern Conference final series, two games to none. The Galaxy also won the Western Conference series in two games, edging the Kansas City 2-1 on Sunday.

The championship game will be played in Foxboro, Mass. on Sunday.

The Galaxy outlasted the wily in a shootout 3-1 after playing to a 1-1 tie in regulation in Kansas City. Preki had given Kansas City a 1-0 lead, putting in a rebound of his own penalty kick after he was pulled down in the penalty area by Greg Vanney in the 69th minute.

Vanney, a rookie defender, atoned for his mistake and equalised eight minutes later.

Salvadoran Mauricio Cienfuegos converted the game-winning shot in the tie-breaker after teammates Robin Fraser and Vanney had scored. Paul Wright tallied for the wily Los Angeles goalkeeper David Kramer, who replaced Jorge Campos in goal when the Mexican International went to forward in the 73rd minute, stopped shots by Preki and Mike Sorber and forced Mark Chung to shoot wide right.

Vanney, who finished with five goals in the regular season, connected for the game-winner in the Galaxy's 2-1 triumph in Pasadena, Calif. on Wednesday night. Chris Armas had lifted Los Angeles into a 1-0 lead in the 48th minute before Preki tied it several minutes later.

In Tampa on Saturday, Salvadoran Raul Diaz Arce broke a 1-1 tie in the 82nd minute to lift United to its fifth victory in six matches over the Mutiny, which captured the regular-season Eastern Conference title.

Rookie midfielder Steve Ralston had given Tampa Bay a 1-0 advantage in the 14th minute, but United drew even on a goal by defensive midfielder Richie Williams, who set up Arce's score in the 49th minute.

Arce recorded a hat-trick to power United to a 4-1 win in the series opener on Thursday in Washington, D.C. As the Mutiny played without both Colombian midfielder Carlos Valderrama and Canadian midfielder Frank Yallop, who had commitments to their respective national teams in World Cup qualifying matches.

After Arce and Tampa Bay's Roy Lassiter traded first-half goals, United broke the game open with three scores within a six-minute span. Steve Rammel snapped the 1-1 tie in the 54th minute before Arce put home a pair of insurance goals in the 58th and 60th minutes.

Hill negotiates speedy interviews

TOKYO (R) — New Formula One world champion Damon Hill sped through hours of press interviews on Monday, negotiating slippery questions about his future with the same skill he showed in winning the title.

Hill refused to rise to baited questions about whether in his moment of glory he felt bitter about his rejection by the Williams team as its driver next season when he had won them a world title.

He spent more than four hours in the Reuter Television studio in Tokyo answering almost non-stop questions from more than a dozen mainly British news organisations in live radio and television broadcasts.

"I feel no bitterness towards Williams. It was their decision. I didn't want to go but they thought it

was for the best and that's life," Hill said. "I'm moving on and that's the end of the story."

"I wish them well and am glad I could leave them on the right note in winning my last race for them," he added.

The 36-year-old Briton wrapped up the title on Sunday when he won the Japan Grand Prix at Suzuka. His nearest rival Jacques Villeneuve, also driving a Williams, lost his chance of glory when he retired with 15 laps to go.

Hill said he went into the race determined to take the lead from the start to take the pressure off himself and put it on Villeneuve.

"I concentrated extra hard on the start and it paid off," Hill said.

Hill said his concentration faltered, for several laps

when he learned Villeneuve had pulled out, effectively handing him the title.

"I had to pull myself back together and then I focused on winning the race and not letting up," Hill said.

Hill said the world title, following those of his father Graham in 1962 and 1968, was a dream moment as he felt like celebrating until Christmas.

"Nothing has stopped since I got out of the car at Suzuka," he said. Looking into the future, Williams said his new team TWR arrows had the potential to win some races next year but he stopped short of forecasting another world title for himself.

"It won't be easy to defend the title," he said. "We have a lot of hard work to do but I'm excited about the challenge."

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Cardinals beat Braves to lead series 3-1

ST. LOUIS (R) — Brian Jordan hit a home run in the bottom of the eighth inning, and the St. Louis Cardinals rallied from three runs down to beat the Atlanta Braves 4-3 Sunday to move within one win of the World Series.

Jordan, who played football for the Atlanta Falcons from 1989-91, lined a 2-1 pitch from Greg McMichael over the fence in left-centre field for his second post-season homer.

Dennis Eckersley made it stand up, setting down the last three Braves in the ninth after Jermaine Dye led off with a double. He got pinch-hitter Luis Polonia on a popout to second baseman Luis Alcega and struck out pinch-hitter Terry Pendleton and Marquis Grissom.

The Cardinals have a surprising three games to one lead over the defending World Series champions and can wrap up the best-of-seven National League championship series Monday night in St. Louis.

"Everytime we need someone to step up we get it," said Royce Clayton, who beat out an infield hit to tie the game for the Cardinals in the seventh inning. "Tonight it was (Jordan's) turn, and he



Atlanta Braves pitcher Denny Neagle, pictured in a triple exposure, delivers a pitch during third inning play in game four of the National League Championship Series against the Atlanta Braves. St. Louis defeated Atlanta 4-3 (Reuters photo)

came through big time."

For most of the game, the Braves appeared to regain the formula that propelled them to five straight post-season appearances.

Denny Neagle, acquired in August from Pittsburgh, held St. Louis to one hit over six innings as Atlanta built a 3-0 lead.

He got the first two outs in

the seventh before John Mabry singled and Tom Pagnozzi walked. Neagle told manager Bobby Cox he was tired and Cox brought in McMichael.

Cardinals' manager Tony La Russa said: "We were watching (Neagle) very closely and we could see him starting to change. And obviously, they saw the same thing."

The Cardinals wasted no time getting to McMichael.

Rookie pinch-hitter Dmitri Young, hitless in his only previous post-season at-bat, lined a triple to the gap in left-centre for his first career extra-base hit. Pinch-hitter Luis Alcega walked and Clayton beat out an infield hit, bringing home young with the tying run.

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Wihdat climb atop standings

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Wihdat Monday took the lead atop the Kingdom's Premier League soccer standings when they beat Al Hussein 2-0.

The replayed match was played starting in the 42nd minute with tightheads Al Wihdat leading 1-0. The match had been halted by the referee last week after technical irregularities. The Jordan Soccer Federation then ruled that the match be resumed without spectators.

The win put Al Wihdat in the lead with 18 points followed by Al Ahli, Al Faisali

| Team | P | W | D | L | GF | GA | Pts |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Wihdat | 8 | 5 | 3 | - | 14 | 4 | 18 |
| Ahli | 9 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 20 | 11 | 16 |
| Faisali | 8 | 4 | 4 | - | 15 | 6 | 16 |
| Hussein | 9 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 13 | 8 | 16 |
| Ramtha | 9 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 7 | 15 |
| Qadissieh | 9 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 14 | 14 | 11 |
| S. Al Hussein | 8 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 12 | 7 |
| Jazireh | 9 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 6 |
| Kufroum | 9 | - | 4 | 5 | 5 | 19 | 4 |
| Qozazi | 8 | - | 2 | 6 | 6 | 19 | 2 |

* Shabab Al Hussein play Qozazi Wednesday while Al Wihdat meet Al Faisali Friday in the league's two postponed matches

and Al Hussein.

Two more matches remain before the first leg of the competition concludes on Friday Oct. 18.

Al Qozazi play Shabab Al Hussein Wednesday while Al Wihdat still have a match left against Al Faisali Friday.

Horse endurance race to start from Mouaqqar Friday

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Over 215 entries will be fighting it out in the Jordanian desert in Friday's endurance race to be held as part of this year's Arabian Horse Festival.

Organised by the Jordanian Arabian Horse Society, the race will be held under the patronage of Crown Prince of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

This year's race includes the biggest number of overall competitors to take part in an endurance race, as well as the highest number of female participants at 14.

The event is 80 kilometres long and will start 3km off Mouaqqar. The participants will pass through the desert castles of Harrarah, and Amra and will finish at Al Azraq resthouse after passing through four stops for rest and veterinary checks.

Emirates Airlines are again sponsoring the event with the first two prizes being Nissan Patrol cars. The third place finisher will get JD 19,000. The fourth JD 17,000. The rest of the prizes will also be in cash going down from JD 15,000 to the fifth place finisher to JD 2,850 to the 20th.

Makinen crashes in San Remo Rally

GUBBIO, Italy (R) — Tommi Makinen, newly-crowned world champion, crashed on the first stage of the San Remo Rally Monday and his injured co-driver was flown to hospital.

The Finn rolled his Mitsubishi heavily just 500 metres into the rally and went out of the race.

Makinen, who said he had misjudged a corner, was unhurt but co-driver Seppo Harjane injured his back and was taken by helicopter to hospital where he was detained for an X-ray.

The first stage was cancelled after another Finn, Jarmo Kytölehto, crashed his Ford within sight of the start.

Italy's Andrea Dallavilla took the race lead in his Toyota after setting the fastest time in the second test.

"It was a big surprise to me because I have a problem with the brakes and I drove 17 kilometres with a puncture," Dallavilla, leading a world championship rally for the first time, said.

The San Remo Rally is the eighth round of the World Championship.

UEFA Cup preview Depleted Moenchengladbach play Monaco today

PARIS (AFP) — Borussia Moenchengladbach must deal with multiple absences on Tuesday as they attempt to lift morale with a win against Monaco in the UEFA Cup second round on Tuesday.

Moenchengladbach, who were beaten 1-0 by Freiburg on Friday, are definitely without defender Michael Klunkert and midfielders Karlheinz Pflipsen and Romanian loan Lupescu.

And there are signs that Christian Hochstaeter and Dutch striker Max Huiberts could also miss the match.

Club official Rolf Ruessman reported a "very organised and technically strong team" after watching Monaco, who will be without suspended Franck Dumas on Tuesday, draw 0-0 with Bastia at the weekend.

Valencia, who put out holders Bayern Munich in the first round, travel to Slavia Prague, whose side has been broken up since they reached last year's UEFA Cup semi-final. The Czech side are also without the suspended Martin

Penicka for the match.

Depleted Sporting Lisbon, who beat French opponents Montpellier in the first round, are without Dominguez, Cruz and Pedrosa for another trip to France — this time to Metz.

They go into the match having lost 1-0 at home to FC Porto in the league this weekend.

Metz also have their problems. Brazilian midfielder Isaias has pulled his

right hamstring and is unavailable for three weeks.

Midfielder Cyril Serres has a knee problem. And defender Philippe Gaillot has an injured ankle.

Having lost to Paris Saint Germain at the weekend, Joel Muller is set to change his side with Robert Pires back from suspension and in for disappointing Stephane Adam.

AS Roma, who hammered AC Milan 3-0 in the Italian League, make a trip to Karlsruhe, while Newcastle, who shot to the top of the Premiership at the weekend, are England's sole representatives in the competition and face Hungary's Ferencvaros.

The Hungarian side is without suspended Zoltan Jagodics and Dejan Milovanovic.

Anderlecht, who lost 4-0 to Saint Trond in the Belgian League at the weekend, take on Portugal's Vitoria Guimaraes, who must do without suspended Marco Freitas.

Inter Milan, who took over on top of the Italian League at the weekend, have an easy tie on paper against Austria's Casino Graz, who are without suspended Gregor Poetscher.

Lazio, one of the favourites in the competition, are without Giuseppe Signori for the home match against Spanish side Tenerife while Bernd Hollerbach and Markus Schupp are out of Hamburg's match against Spartak Moscow — the only Wednesday game.

UEFA Cup 2nd round matches

| Tuesday | Wednesday |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dinamo Tbilisi (Geo) | Boavista (Por) |
| Legia Varsovie (Pol) | Besiktas Istanbul (Tur) |
| Slavia Prague (Cze) | Valencia (Spa) |
| Vitoria Guimaraes (Por) | Anderlecht (Bel) |
| Karlsruhe (Ger) | As Roma (Ita) |
| Helsingborg (Swe) | Neuchatel Xamax (Swi) |
| Espanyol (Spa) | Feyenoord Rotterdam (Ned) |
| FC Brugge (Bel) | National Bucharest (Rom) |
| B. Moenchengladbach (Ger) | Monaco (Fra) |
| Inter Milan (Ita) | Casino Graz (Aut) |
| Aberdeen (Sco) | Broendby (Den) |
| FC Metz (Fra) | Spartak Moscow (Rus) |
| Ferencváros (Hun) | |
| Schalke 04 (Ger) | |
| Lazio Rome (Ita) | |

Ronaldo earns ovation as Barcelona pull out all the stops

PARIS (AFP) — Barcelona continued to set a searing pace at the top of the Spanish first division when they came away 5-1 winners from Compostela where their Brazilian striker Ronaldo turned in another superb performance to earn a standing ovation from the home fans.

The result enabled Bobby Robson's side to surge two points clear of Deportivo and old rivals Real Madrid.

In Italy, Inter Milan beat Piacenza 2-0 thanks to goals from Marco Branca and French international Youri Djorkaeff, to climb to the top of the table after front-runners AC Milan and Juventus crashed to shock defeats.

But it wasn't all plain sailing for Inter. Their England midfielder Paul Ince was sent off after just 37 minutes.

Ince, who cost Inter seven million pounds (\$10.5m) when he arrived from Manchester United last summer, was shown the red card after apparently lashing out at Piacenza's Gianpiero Piovani as they waited for a corner. Ironically Piovani was also sent off in the dying seconds of the game for elbowing.

Brazilian midfielder Leonardo scored the only goal as French first division

leaders Paris Saint Germain beat Metz 1-0 away to keep their seven point lead over champions Auxerre who beat visiting Lens by the same scoreline.

The Paris side, who failed to win the 1996 league title despite having a 10 point lead before Christmas, are being chased hard by the pack and only six points separate Auxerre from the 14th-placed club.

In Germany, striker Jurgen Klinsmann led his Bayern Munich side from the front on Saturday, scoring two of his side's goals in an impressive 4-2 triumph over Cologne.

The result lifted Bayern to second place behind Stuttgart who stay top on goal difference despite drawing 2-2 away to struggling Hansa Rostock.

Barcelona's magic won them the admiration of the Compostela supporters who were particularly impressed by visiting striker Ronaldo.

The South American scored two of the Barcelona goals and had a hand in two others and after the match the Compostela manager likened him to the legendary Pele.

Compostela were rocked back on their heels in the first sixty seconds when Ronaldo's first cross of the match was deflected into

the net by home defender, William. The second Barcelona goal was not long in coming, however, Ronaldo sending a perfect through ball to compatriot Giovanni who slotted home in the 16th minute.

Barcelona went 3-0 clear just before half-time. Ronaldo, the ball glued to his boot charging out of his own half, and shaking off a series of tackles before picking his spot to blast past unhappy home goalkeeper Fernando Peralta.

Ronaldo scored again early in the second-half after racing onto a ball from Luis Figo and Figo then added a fifth.

Nigerian international Christopher Ochen salvaged a late goal for Compostela with a diving header.

Deporivo left things late — Brazilian midfielder Donato scoring the only goal in the away match at Oviedo in the dying seconds.

And disappointing Real Madrid had to settle for a 2-2 draw at Racing Santander — all the goals coming in the last twenty minutes and Real twice coming from behind.

In a scrappy game, Santander's Russian forward Vladimir Beschastnykh put his side clear after finally breaking the offside trap and

flicking the ball over Real's German goalkeeper Bodo Illgner.

The referee came to Real's rescue, however, by awarding a controversial penalty which Croatian striker Davor Suker converted.

Racing struck straight when defender Gabriel Schurrer rose above a sea of heads to nod home a cross. But with just five minutes left, Real's Predrag Mijatovic capitalised on another goalmouth scramble to make it 2-2.

In Italy, AS Roma romped to an emphatic 3-0 victory over AC Milan thanks to goals from Totti (13), Caprioli (19) and Balbo (90).

Milan, second at the start of the weekend, slumped to seventh spot.

Meanwhile Juventus failed in their biggest test of character so far this season when their depleted side lost 2-1 at Vicenza.

The European champions were top of the Serie A before the weekend thanks to the efforts of striker Alen Boksic, playmaker Alessandro Del Piero, skipper Antonio Conte and goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi.

But all four missed Sunday's match and it proved costly.

Violence mars Zamalek's Champions' Cup tie in Tunisia

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Egyptian club Zamalek made another violent return to Tunisia as fighting marred their African Champions' Cup defeat by CS Sfaxien Sunday.

The match was stopped twice after players traded punches as CS Sfaxien scraped a 1-0 win in the semifinal, first leg tie at their home ground.

The match was one of six semifinal, first leg matches played in the three African club competitions at the weekend.

Zamalek, who were involved in ugly on-field fighting when they lost to Tunisian club Esperance in Tunis in the 1994 Champions' Cup final, had defender Nabil Mohamed sent off for a vicious elbow jab on an opponent that sparked off a two-minute stoppage in the second-half.

There was another break of some four minutes later after Medhat Abdelhadi brought

down Sfaxien's Tunisian international Skander Souyeh and conceded a penalty with 10 minutes left to play.

The awarding of the penalty led to more on-field fighting and spectators rained

Sodigraf of Zaire in their African Cup Winners' Cup tie.

Two former Cup Winners' Cup holders Arab Contractors of Egypt and Cameroon's Canon Yaounde met in their semifinal tie on Friday.

A late goal from Essido ensured a fighting chance for Canon in the return match in Yaounde in two weeks' time.

Confederation of African Football (CAF) Cup holders Ettoile Sahel of Tunisia won 2-0 in their semifinal, first leg match against Vita Club of Zaire in Sousse on Saturday.

Riad Jelassi scored an early goal for the hosts and Imed Ben Younes added a vital second midway through the second-half.

Kawkab Marrakesh of Morocco scored the biggest win of the weekend's matches with Redaoui scoring a hat-trick in their 4-1 home victory over Kenya Breweries on Sunday.

The return legs will all be played on the weekend of October 25-27.

AFRICAN SOCCER

down plastic bottles on to the pitch.

Souyeh converted the spot kick to give his side a narrow lead to take to the Egyptian coastal city of Alexandria for the return match on October 27.

A vital away goal by Sam Pam ensured a 1-1 draw for Nigeria's shooting stars in the other Champions' Cup semifinal on Friday against Algeria's JS Kabylie in Algiers.

The match was the first of two back-to-back Cup ties at the July 5th stadium, which later saw CR Belouizdad also held to a 1-1 draw by

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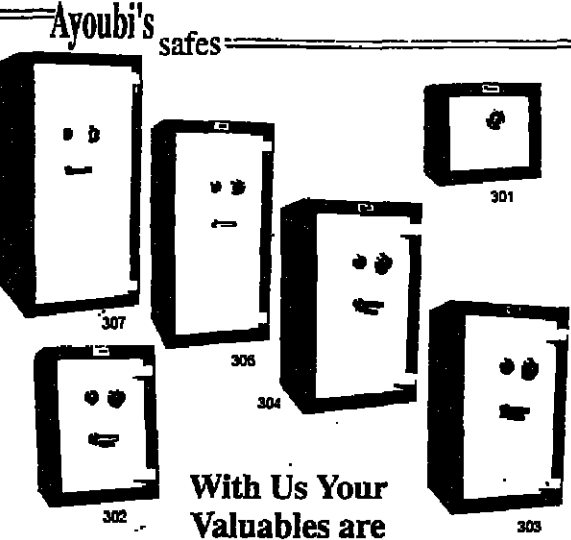
- Q.1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- AK7 ♠ 984 ♠ 884 AK72
- The bidding has proceeded: WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH 1♣ 1♦ 1♥ 1♠ What do you bid now?
- A - You have some useful values, and game is not out of the question. Since nine tricks at no trump are more likely than 11 at clubs, we would scratch a two-club response in favor of the more aggressive takeout to one no trump.
- Q.2 - East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
- AK1092 ♠ KJ87 ♠ 64 AKJ75
- The bidding has proceeded: NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST 1♣ 1♦ 1♥ 1♠ What action do you take?
- A - Your trump is not good enough for a double, and it might seem that your hand is a little light for one no trump. However, your honors behind the opponent's suit are worth more than their actual count, so we would bid one no trump without any qualms.
- Q.3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
- AKJ974 ♠ QJ863 AKQ9
- The bidding has proceeded: NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST 1♣ 1♦ 1♥ 1♠ What action do you take?
- A - You have made your slam try by cue-bidding three spades, and partner had many ways to cooperate. Instead, North chose to sign off by simply rebidding four hearts. Respect partner's decision and pass.
- Q.4 - Both vulnerable as South you hold:
- AK ♠ KQ1094 ♠ AQ63 AKK9
- The bidding has proceeded: NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST 1♣ 1♦ 1♥ 1♠ What action do you take?
- A - You are certainly going to game, but the combined holding could play better in a suit. Bid three diamonds now. That gives partner the opportunity to show three-card support, bid three no trump or proceed to a high-level diamond contract.

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3- Good knowledge of Hebrew is an advantage.
4- Must have East Jerusalem or West Bank identification documents.

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Masood forces close in on Taleban in Kabul

KABUL (Agencies) — Fighting between Afghanistan's ruling Taleban militia and former government forces raged near Kabul on Monday, putting the capital under pressure for the first time since it fell to the fundamentalists.

The Taleban admitted losing key areas north of Kabul to forces loyal to the ousted government, but described their withdrawal as a "tactical retreat" to avoid civilian casualties.

They also dismissed the threat of former government troops seizing the capital Kabul, which the militia took control of just 18 days ago, saying the ousted government's military commander, Ahmad Shah Masood, was a spent force. "Masood is not on the ground here any longer. The power which he had is finished and the few people he has are not capable of coming back to Kabul, although they are capable of causing trouble in the area," said Mohammad Sher Stanakzai, the Taleban's acting deputy foreign minister.

He also ruled out peaceful negotiations to end the fighting, saying "it will be very difficult now to cooperate with the former government as they are fighting us now."

Nevertheless, the 52-nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), based in Saudi Arabia, said Monday it would send a mission to

Afghanistan on Tuesday to seek a negotiated end to fighting.

Past efforts by the OIC and by the United Nations have failed to end the factional war which has plagued Afghanistan since the overthrow of communist rule in Kabul by the Mujahideen in April 1992.

The Taleban, who began their quest to establish an Islamic government in Afghanistan two years ago, control much of the country and captured Kabul on Sept. 27.

However, their push further north has run into a fierce fightback from the forces of the ousted government.

An official from the ex-government forces claimed the Taleban had suffered more than 200 casualties in recent fighting and that former government troops had moved to just four kilometres north of the Afghan capital.

His claims could not immediately be independently confirmed, but other reports said the fighting was as close as 10 kilometres from the northwestern suburbs of the capital.

Mr. Stanakzai admitted that Taleban fighters had been killed and injured in fighting, but said it was "very difficult" to provide a figure for their losses.

However, scores of Taleban jeeps were seen Sunday transporting dead and wounded fighters to Kabul airport where they

were loaded onto flights to the Taleban base at Kandahar.

Taleban forays north since the fall of Kabul have been aimed at capturing the rest of the country from former government troops as well as Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, whose fighters control six provinces, and other factions.

Mr. Masood, the main military backer of ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani, pulled his forces out of Kabul ahead of the advancing Taleban and regrouped in his native Panjshir Valley about 90 kilometres north of the capital.

In another development, General Dostum met Mr. Masood to discuss the possibility of forging an alliance and strategy against the Taleban militia, spokesmen for both parties told AFP. The meeting included Mr. Rabbani, the former governor of Western Herat province Ismail Khan, and other leaders.

The country is also riven by other factions. One of them, led by Mr. Khan, is preparing to launch a large-scale offensive against the Taleban to recapture the western Afghan province of Herat, Afghan sources in Iran said Monday.

The Taleban has strongly warned Iran against supporting troops loyal to the ousted Afghan government in Herat.



JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN SUMMIT: His Majesty King Hussein on Monday receives Palestinian President Yasser Arafat upon Mr. Arafat's arrival at the Royal Court for talks (see page one) (photo by Yousef Allan)

Queen, Mrs. Rabin win Eleanor Roosevelt medals, urge patience in Middle East peace process

HYDE PARK, New York (AP) — Her Majesty Queen Noor and the widow of slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin urged patience to those looking for immediate progress in Middle East peace negotiations.

Queen Noor and Leah Rabin also vowed to continue to promote the fragile peace process initiated by their husbands despite a rash of recent setbacks.

"Just as in raising that newborn child, in spite of the worries and sacrifices, we will find that the joys and rewards are immeasurable," Queen Noor said.

Mrs. Rabin and the Queen shared the stage Sunday at the home of another prominent woman — Eleanor Roosevelt — at a ceremony honouring their roles in promoting the peace process.

"What I have been doing

since that terrifying night (Yitzhak Rabin was shot) ... with all this feeling of emptiness and that terrible sense of loss. I felt a compulsion and was drawn to carry on the light — to be there for his legacy," Mrs. Rabin said.

"For his legacy, for all that he meant to so many people who share my feeling of loss ... for him I am here," she said, moving many in the crowd of 400 to tears.

The two women were the international winners of the 1996 Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill medals, which recognise people whose achievements reflect part of Mrs. Roosevelt's life work.

Mrs. Roosevelt, the wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was born at the estate named Val-Kill in Hyde Park, located 100 kilometres south of Albany. Mrs. Rabin spoke of her husband's push for peace at

the time of his assassination nearly one year ago, and compared him with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and U.S. civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., also slain by their own countrymen.

"His people, the black community of America, continued the march," the widow said of Mr. King. "My husband Yitzhak was shot dead on the way to the promised land. He was a happy man, to have embarked on the train of peace, but he did not reach the final station. ... He was shot dead before my eyes."

The Queen and Mrs. Rabin implored Middle East negotiators and world leaders to be patient.

"Peace is hard work, but in spite of that hard work, or perhaps because of it, nothing is more valuable," said Queen Noor.

Israeli cabinet 'approves' opening of new prayer hall at Aqsa Mosque

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Israeli cabinet on Sunday approved the opening of an ancient underground Muslim prayer hall next to Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque, state television reported.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened the meeting of his inner security cabinet to discuss implications of the planned changes at the Al Aqsa compound, a flash point for Israeli-Arab tensions.

Ministers decided that the opening of the Musalla Al Marwani prayer hall, bitterly opposed by Jewish militants, was an irreversible "fait accompli," the television said.

Acting Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi said: "We decided not to intervene right at the start of work in exchange for an agreement with the Palestinians for the opening by Israel" in September of a new entrance to an archaeological tunnel alongside the Al Aqsa compound.

The cabinet decision came after Israel's supreme court, for the second time in three days, rejected Sunday a bid by Jewish militants to prevent the opening of the prayer hall.

At the same time Israeli police announced stepped up security in Jerusalem amid reports that Jewish extremists could try to prevent Islamic authorities from opening the prayer hall to worshippers.

In its ruling, the court rejected a petition filed by the radical Hah Vekayam movement to halt renovation of the prayer area, an extensive series of vaulted underground chambers built in the seventh century which had long fallen into disuse.

The justices ruled that the Hah Vekayam petition was technically flawed, but said the group could refile its demand within 15 days.

On Friday the same judges threw out a similar petition filed by another group, the Temple Mount Faithful. Both groups claimed the renovation work was carried out without the needed construction permits from the Israeli municipal authorities who initially had opposed opening the area.

But after a municipal decision earlier this week lifting its objections to the renovation work, the court ruled Friday that there were no longer any grounds for the Temple Mount Faithful petition.

Islamic religious authori-

ties said the refurbished prayer area would be opened to worshippers and tourists in coming days.

They had originally announced that area would be open as of Sunday. But on Sunday morning they said no formal opening ceremony would be held and that work on the area was continuing.

Radical groups like Hah Vekayam want to seize the Al Aqsa compound, the third holiest site in Islam, and rebuild what they describe as the Jewish temple which stood at the same location until it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said meanwhile he had placed police units deployed around Al Aqsa on alert to keep Jewish extremists away from the mosques.

"There are extremist groups which I am sure will try to force their way onto the mount and into Solomon's Stables," he said, using a name for the Marwani hall which dates from the era when it was used to house Crusaders' horses.

"We are ready for them and are taking steps to prevent any type of provocation," Mr. Kahalani said on Israeli television.

Turkey and Greece trade charges over Cyprus

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey on Monday accused Greek Cypriots of escalating tension on the island following the death of a Greek Cypriot man near the buffer zone that divides Cyprus.

Greek Foreign Minister Theodore Pangalos hit back saying Turkey was of whipping up tensions on Cyprus using "Turkish settlers and fascist elements."

Ankara wants to show that the two communities "can never live together in peace," Mr. Pangalos said.

"It is evident that the Greek Cypriots have chosen a policy of tension and provocation instead of one of negotiation and compromise," Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel told reporters.

Turkish Cypriot troops shot dead a 50-year-old Greek Cypriot on Sunday after they said the man ignored several warning shots fired in the air and crossed the buffer zone into the Turkish Cypriot side.

The incident happened as thousands of Greek Cypriots

gathered to protest Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus. "Whether Turk or Greek, every death is bitter and unnecessary. The negotiations should start immediately to eliminate such deaths," Rauf Denktaş, leader of the Turkish Cypriots, was quoted as saying by the Turkish Cypriot news agency.

Greek Cypriot authorities maintain that Petros Poulides, 58, was gathering snails and accused the soldiers of gunning him down in cold-blood.

But the Turkish Cypriot authorities say he had wandered into the U.N.-patrolled buffer zone dividing the two communities.

Kakulides was the fourth Greek Cypriot to be killed in inter-communal violence since June.

Mr. Pangalos also urged the international community to scrap its "tolerance towards Turkey" and called for pressure by "military or economic means against Ankara to make it abandon its attitude."

'Witness' recounts massacre of Croats

BELGRADE (AFP) — An alleged eyewitness said he saw Serbs bring over 200 hospital patients to a suspected killing field in eastern Croatia after the town of Vukovar fell to the Serbs in 1991, a Belgrade daily reported Monday.

International experts have recently unearthed 200 bodies from a mass grave near Ovcar, a hamlet close to Vukovar. They were believed to be those of people from the town's hospital who were killed the day after Vukovar fell.

Monday's edition of the Dnevni Telegraph carried an account of the events from a Serb military reservist who said he was present at the scene. The chilling testimony tells of prisoners being brutally attacked by Serb paramilitaries, or "Chetniks."

"My unit, 15 to 20 of us, was called to secure prisoners-of-war in Ovcar. A group of maybe 40 Chetniks was already there, totally drunk or crazy," the reservist said, who spoke only on condition of anonymity. "More than 500 prisoners, aged from 17 to 80, mostly men and some older women were being held in big hangar ... faced towards the wall. They were standing almost naked and barefoot on the concrete, freezing," he said.

"A group of Chetniks was collecting necklaces, rings and wristwatches ... in front of the hangar, the others were checking a huge pile of clothes, looking for money," he said, according to the daily.

The reservist said that his unit commander was trying to separate the prisoners from the paramilitary forces, but they had already started "their cruel death game." "I saw a man hitting a prisoner with a rifle butt, smashing his head in. We couldn't do anything to protect the prisoners. With every attempt to stop the savagery, they threatened to shoot all of us," he reported.

The reservist said that his unit went to Ovcar that afternoon, and a couple of hours later, a truck crammed with prisoners from the hangar arrived in the nearby woods.

"Our commander ordered us to withdraw, and that is how we avoided taking part in the liquidation... I know these people were prisoners from Vukovar hospital and I am sure there were more than 200 of them," he said.

"After we left, the shooting continued up to 1 a.m. People were killed just for being Croats," he said. On Saturday, Dnevni Telegraph carried another report of the killings from an officer in the former Yugoslav army. The officer said he had been present when Croat prisoners were evacuated from Vukovar hospital.

"Young men, aged between 18 to 25, were taken out from the hospital. They were in good condition, fresh shaven, in clean pyjamas," he said.

"I asked Captain (Miroslav) Radic how many prisoners were in the hospital, thinking of a possible exchange. He answered: 'These are dead men,'" the officer said, again on conditions of anonymity.

COLUMN 8

Vasectomy for a snip at charity auction

BLENHEIM, New Zealand (R) — A New Zealand mother of six was the successful bidder for a vasectomy at a charity auction held in the South Island coastal town of Blenheim, the New Zealand Press Association reported Monday. The operation, donated by a local surgeon, was one of dozens of items on offer at a fundraiser for a Magnetic Resonance Imager (MRI) scanner for the local hospital. The vasectomy fetched \$239 from the lucky mother, who wished to remain anonymous. She said she did not make the bid in person because she was unable to get a baby-sitter for her large brood. The women present at the auction got into the spirit of things and there was enthusiastic bidding for the "private cut" vasectomy, said auction organiser Toni Gillian. A few concerned men protested light-heartedly by leaving the room. But they were lured back by the more romantic items on offer such as magnums of champagne, deer velvet liqueur and dinners for two.

Suspect stowaway survives 10-hour flight

LONDON (R) — An Indian national found wandering around Heathrow Airport was suspected of having stowed away in a plane's baggage hold on a 10-hour flight from New Delhi to London, British officials said. "He's lucky to be alive given... the temperature in the baggage hold of an aircraft flying at the heights it would fly to reach London from Delhi," an immigration official said. A worker for British Airways found the unidentified man wandering in a restricted area near one of their aircraft at Heathrow Airport, west of London Saturday. After being questioned by immigration officials he was treated for hypothermia at a local hospital. "We believe he stowed away in the baggage hold of an aircraft that took him from Delhi to London," the immigration official told reporters.

Author's son sends pianos to Cuba

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — A California piano tuner said he was sending a shipment of pianos to Cuba in what he called a tribute to his late mother, crusading author Jessica Mitford. Tuner Benjamin Treuhaff, 48, said he planned to travel to Cuba to recondition some of the pianos despite receiving warning from the U.S. Treasury Department that he could be fined up to \$1.3 million and jailed for up to 10 years. This is the second shipment of pianos to Cuba by Treuhaff's "Send a Piano to Havana" project. The first shipment of 23 pianos arrived there late last year. Mr. Treuhaff said this shipment was a tribute to his late mother, Mitford, famous for her book *The American Way of Death*, an indictment of the funeral industry, died in nearby Oakland in July. After her death, dozens of admirers contributed more than \$10,000 in her honour to send the pianos to Cuba. Mr. Treuhaff said "Send a Piano to Havana" was Mitford's "favourite charity" and the government's missteps in dealing with the subversive musical project brought her much glee towards the end of her life.

Political satire on JTV draws anger from Lower House of Parliament

AMMAN (J.T.) — Lower House of Parliament Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour on Monday demanded an apology from those responsible for allowing the screening of a television programme which, he said, insulted members of Parliament.

The demand came amid reports that some members of Parliament were planning to file a lawsuit against Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Minister of Information Marwan Muasher and Nasser Judeh, director of Jordan Television (JTV).

The programme, a political satire called "Ahlam Hukumeh" (Welcome Government) starred by popular actors Nabil Sawalha and Hisham Yonis, went on Jordan Television's Arabic Channel 1 weeks ago. It was broadcast every Thursday evening.

The first two episodes of

the show made fun of the government, including the prime minister and other ministers, and Parliament members.

While the public has largely welcomed the show, some of the sharp-tongued criticism implied in the programme has drawn the ire of Parliament members.

In a letter sent to Prime Minister Kabariti, Speaker Srour said that members of Parliament would accept "sarcastic attacks," but the programme contained "insult and slander" against legislators.

Mr. Srour demanded that those responsible for allowing the programme to be broadcast, including the Ministry of Information, offer a public apology and ensure that such programmes are not repeated, parliamentary sources said.

Reports in the local press said Monday some members of Parliament were

planning to file a case against the government.

None of the deputies were identified in the reports, but parliamentary sources said most of them were from opposition groups which contend that the government had purposely allowed the show to poke fun at them and belittle them in front of their constituents.

But Dr. Muasher, at a press briefing last week, rejected such suggestions. "It is true that Jordan Television has contracted the show, but it does not predetermine the contents of the show," he said.

The minister noted that the isham and Nabil duo had been staging their satire on theatre and had become very popular and appealing to the public.

"We have no political or other motivation behind contracting the show except for entertainment purposes," the minister said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sudanese dissidents form army

CAIRO (AP) — Sudanese dissident groups have agreed to create a new military force to try to topple the Islamic-orientated regime in Khartoum, an opposition leader said Monday. Farouk Abu Issa said the Sudanese National Democratic Alliance decided to launch the militia at a meeting of leaders of its factions over the weekend in the Eritrean capital Asmara. The alliance was formed by several opposition groups and the southern rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) last year to try to oust the Sudanese government backed by the Islamic National Front of Hassan Tourabi. "All our guns have now been put together to get rid of the oppressive regime of the Islamic front," Mr. Abu Issa told the Associated Press in a telephone interview.

Beirut declares war on corruption

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese judicial authorities have declared war on corruption after media reports of financial scandals in public institutions. Beirut's senior prosecutor general was quoted on Monday as saying, Prosecutor-General Adnan Addoum told the daily newspaper Al Safir the judicial year, which began in September, "will be devoted entirely to fighting corruption in public institutions in all its forms, including receiving bribes." "Just as we succeeded last year in ending the drugs trade in Lebanon, we will succeed this year in putting an end to the issue of corruption," he said, adding that suspects would be investigated

"without waiting for anyone's permission." Beirut newspapers have recently reported cases of alleged corruption, including embezzlement of funds, in some government ministries and state institutions. Billionaire Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri said on Monday judicial authorities were investigating some cases and charges of alleged corruption.

Remains of 750 Iranians found

TEHRAN (AFP) — The remains of 750 Iranian soldiers killed toward the end of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war were found recently in southwest Iran, close to the Iraqi border, the official news agency IRNA said Monday. A funeral service will be held Wednesday for them in front of the Iranian parliament, IRNA said. The government has called for a "massive" turnout for the service, state television said.

Russian plane skids off runway

ISTANBUL (AP) — A Russian passenger plane skidded off the runway at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport Monday and came to a halt near a road. No one was injured, officials said. "The plane landed normally but then failed to stop. Its brakes would not hold," airport spokesman Can Cosar said. All 121 passengers and 14 crew-members aboard the plane, a IL-62 belonging to the Domodedovo Airline, were uninjured, he said. The plane was coming in from Moscow. Twelve passengers were injured at the same airport in August when an Egyptian jetliner missed the runway, skidded onto a road and hit a taxi.